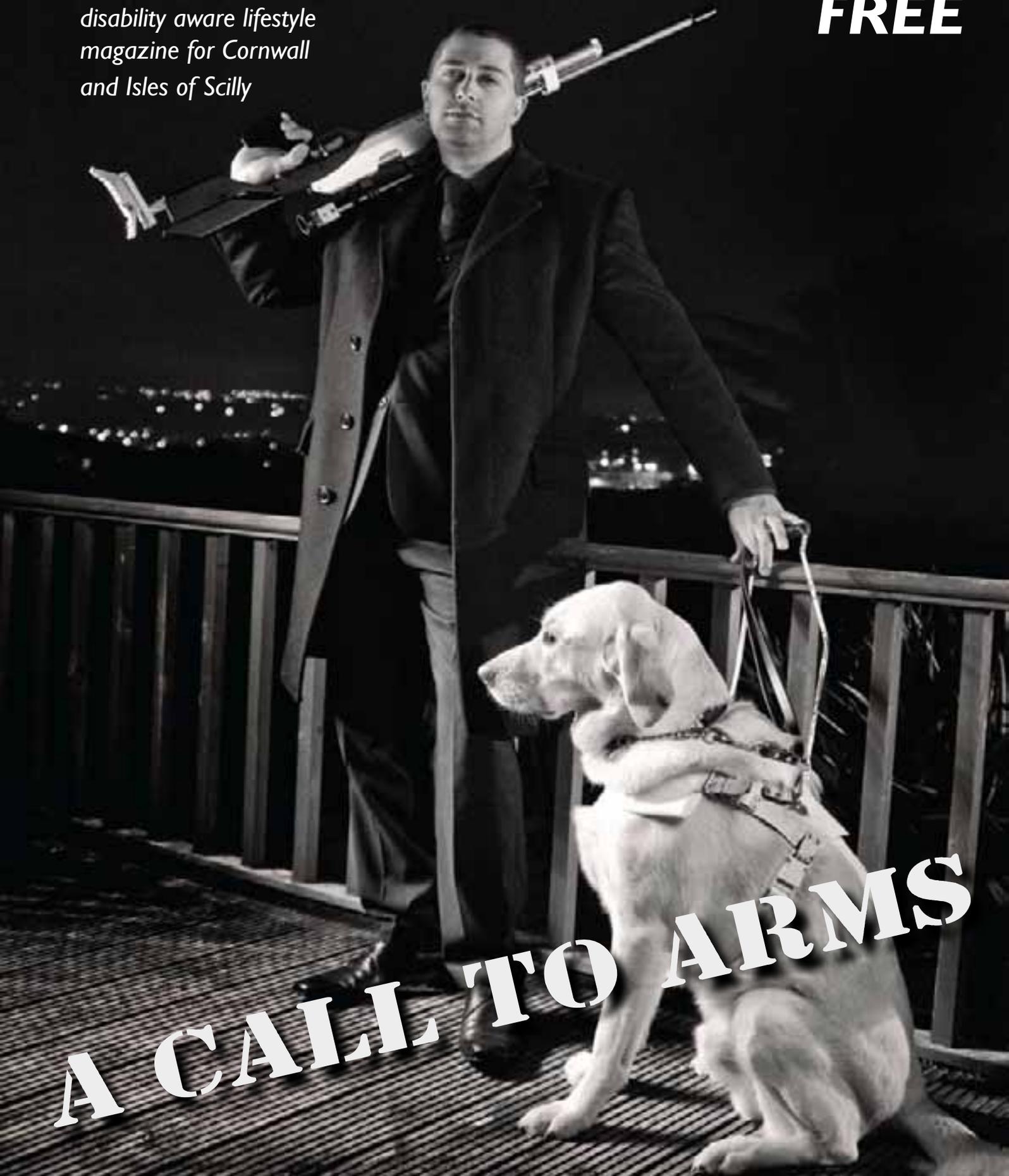


Issue 12 – Summer 2011

DISCOVER

*disability aware lifestyle
magazine for Cornwall
and Isles of Scilly*

FREE



A CALL TO ARMS

DISCOVER magazine is published by



We are a disabled people's organisation, act as a representative voice and provide a great range of services to facilitate independent living and challenge discrimination where we see it.

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Welcome

Never before, in the long hard road to dignity, respect and independence, has it been so vital for disabled people to stand together and speak as one voice. It's not scaremongering to state disabled people and by association, their carers and families are being unfairly targeted by cuts, the facts speak for themselves. £10bn of the £89bn target reduction will be directly borne by those already living on the margins of society. The same society that makes little challenge to the frankly dangerous headlines making the news, of 'scroungers, fraudsters, malingerers'. It's not for nothing we continue to cover the issue of Hate Crime.

Disabled people have fought too long and too hard for the right to be independent and equal citizens to give it all up now. Within these pages are the stories of people like Paul Hunt in One man can make a difference who, despite his day to day struggles and the battle against a society that just didn't seem to care, changed things forever by designing what became known as 'the social model of disability'. This changed the disability movement forever and if one man can make such a difference, then many together can start a revolution.....

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Our principal photographer is Geoff Squibb LRPS. You can view and make purchases from Geoff's fantastic gallery of images by visiting:

www.cornishpixels.org.uk



DISCOVER is your magazine

So please send us your stories, letters, pictures, jokes and poems. Do let us know of any forthcoming events so we may share them.

Obviously the buck doesn't stop in the UK, read about ADD International, who work to challenge stigma and discrimination overseas. It's vital DISCOVER continues to provide a voice for those people and organisations seeking to make a better world for disabled people, but of course our magazine isn't just about the struggle! We also need to celebrate the fruits of all this labour, both large and the small, the fun, the frivolity, the food! So find out how the Firestone Rock Band are on a mission to rock their way to social enterprise status and break down educational barriers in the process. Read how bikers bit the bullet revving their way around India to raise money for Cornwall's MS Therapy Centre. If your tastes are a little more sedate and you're a gardener to boot, how about lunch at Cornwall's largest garden centre at Carnon Downs?

Whatever your views, remember DISCOVER is your magazine. We always welcome your contributions, particularly if they engender a little debate. See what we mean with the Disability IT Girl and the Horses Mouth! Have a great summer.

The DISCOVER team

Front cover

Stuart Williams, Cornwall Association Blind Shooting Club, DJ & Manager of Redruth Radio.

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Did you know...

We produce three editions of DISCOVER per year with a print run of 5000 each time.

In addition to sending them to all of our members and groups we work with, they are distributed across Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly to healthcare waiting rooms, such as hospitals and GP & dental surgeries, Cornwall Council venues, including all 22 one stop shops, libraries and some leisure & tourist attractions.

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Recycle me!

When you have finished reading DISCOVER, rather than putting it in the recycling box, why not pass it on to someone else or drop it in to a dentist, chiropodists, day centre, care / nursing home, hairdressers or café. If you have any other ideas or would like to tell us how well travelled your DISCOVER becomes, the please let us know.



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None of the views expressed in DISCOVER necessarily reflect the views of Disability Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Ltd, our members or sponsors. Although our team do their utmost to ensure every service published within the magazine is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, (now part of The Equality Act 2010), readers should be aware we cannot vouch for the full accessibility of each and every one.

A CALL TO ARMS

To the disabled people of Great Britain. Our individual voices are too quiet to be heard, but collectively we can shout loud enough to drown out this tide of abuse against us. Disability Hate Crime, lack of full legal protection, people in care homes costing too much to be let out and not one political party willing to fight for us. We must emulate other successful civil rights movements and with polite determination take our place as equal members of society

***Kaliya Franklin
The Broken of Britain***

Enough of the rhetoric, disabled people feel frightened, scared by the threats being brought to our front door by a coalition government hell bent on cutting the deficit ... at any cost. Is the state guilty of the institutionalised bullying of disabled people? Let's take a look at some of the evidence.

The Independent Living Fund, which supported disabled people with the highest support needs, to pay for and employ Personal Assistants has been closed. This means people with high support needs will be left with reduced support, leaving many faced with the prospect of institutionalisation rather than living independently within our community. While those already receiving the funds will continue to get them, it has been said that many are being stopped because of the local authority spending cuts on social 'care'.

Cuts to the Access to Work program will reduce the number of aids and equipment supplied to disabled people wanting to work, thus preventing many from being able to seek gainful employment.

Disability Living Allowance will be abolished and replaced by Personal Independence Payments

(PIPs). The coalition government have made it clear they wish to cut the percentage of people claiming this by at least 20% through a regime of tougher assessments.

Disabled people will also be hit by the increases in housing costs, meaning many will be in danger of losing their homes. The Supporting People grant will be cut locally by a third, thereby threatening the independence of many.

Employment Support Allowance is replacing Incapacity Benefit and subject to a Work Capability Assessment organised by an information technology company called Atos Origin. This has led to over 500,000 disabled people being denied Incapacity Benefit, losing income and being forced to go to appeal. So far, those who have been getting 24hr support and people with terminal illnesses have passed these tests and been told they are 'fit for work'. 70% of the unfair decisions made by Atos Origin have been overturned at appeal.

Supporting the evidence for a case of 'state bullying', the Disability Benefits Consortium has





published a report 'Benefitting Disabled People?'
The report found that:

- Over half of those respondents who had been for a medical assessment for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) found it stressful, and more than four in ten said it actually made their health condition or impairment worse because of the stress and anxiety caused
- Over half of those respondents who had received a decision on their application for ESA didn't agree with the decision, and of these, half planned to appeal
- Of the 61% of respondents not in work, nearly one third said their impairment or health condition means they cannot work at all
- Just 4% of those respondents not in work said they do not want to work
- Less than 10% of current Disability Living Allowance recipients state the benefit covers all their disability-related additional costs of living, with DLA most commonly used towards items like transport (89%), heating/laundry (68%) and aids/equipment (58%).

These attacks go beyond individuals facing tougher criteria in getting personal assistance. They are attacks on the whole notion of disabled people living with dignity, independently and achieving human rights, all in a country that

ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009.

We must challenge these decisions now at a local level to ensure that local authorities provide disabled people with the support they need, without the fear of 'office economics' over-ruling an accurate needs-based, holistic assessment.

Are we going to wait until disabled people become homeless, out of work or begin to starve in cold homes before we demonstrate? We need to stand together to make it known disabled people will not give up the rights that so many have fought so hard for, over so many years.

Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are
Benjamin Franklin

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European Network on Independent Living

National Equalities Panel report 2010 and Family Resources Survey

'Up to 500,000 wrongly denied incapacity benefit, figures show' Stratton Guardian.co.uk 03.01.2011

United Kingdom Disabled Peoples' Council (UKDPC) response to WCA Harrington Enquiry 2010

Disability Benefits Consortium, Benefitting Disabled People Report? March 2011

www.thebrokenofbritain.blogspot.com 08.04.11



Red Pepper asks fact or fiction?

Red Pepper is a bi-monthly magazine and associated website of left politics and culture. It's a socialist publication which seeks to be a resource for movements for social justice, and a home for anyone who wants to see a world based on equality, meaningful democracy and freedom. For more on Red Pepper visit www.redpepper.org.uk

The government and the press say we are in the grip of a debt crisis caused by the 'bloated' public sector. Here, Red Pepper takes a somewhat different view

Government debt is the highest it's ever been

The UK's government debt is around 70% of GDP (the total amount of goods and services produced in one year). High certainly, but far from unprecedented. Government debt never fell below 100% of GDP between 1920

& 1960 and it's only the past decade or so that it's become normal to think of government debt being stable at around 40% of GDP.

The UK's debt crisis is one of the worst in the world

Data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows the UK has the lowest government debt, as a proportion of GDP, from among the G7 countries¹ (USA, Canada, Germany, Britain, Japan, Italy & France).

Public spending got out of control under the last Labour Government

It's true. Public spending gradually rose under the Labour government in the early part of the decade, but it was from what were historically very low levels.

Levels of public spending are now about the same as they were in the early 1990s, at the time of the last economic crisis, because spending always rises during a recession as a result of welfare spending on unemployment.

In fact, levels of public spending as a proportion of GDP were much lower for most of the noughties than they were than at any point since the 1960s.

Why did Labour did spend more in the years after 2000 or have we forgotten the schools and hospitals with buckets in the corner to catch the leaks, or the grim city centre landscapes with crowds of homeless people sleeping rough?

Labour's increased spending also addressed workforce shortages in schools and the NHS, where more staff were needed to raise educational standards and care for an ageing population.

The UK has a big public sector compared to other countries

Public spending in the UK is lower as a proportion of the economy than France, Italy, Austria, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries². Spending on core areas such as health and education remains comparable or low in relation to other OECD (broadly speaking, 'rich' countries.)

The UK spent just over 8% of its GDP on health in 2007, roughly half that spent in the United States (once the large private sector is taken into account) and well behind Germany, France and most other west European nations.

Public sector workers are overpaid

It is true that very recently average wages in the public sector have moved marginally above those in the private sector. This is mainly because privatisation has pushed many low-paid jobs out to the private sector.

The trend is not that public sector wages have risen sharply, but that private sector wages have fallen - a characteristic of the economic crisis. There is data that shows, it's not that public sector workers are overpaid, but that some private sector workers are severely underpaid.

There is no alternative to cuts

About £5bn could be raised every year from a tax on vacant housing, £25bn by closing tax loopholes and a 'Robin Hood tax' on financial transactions could raise another £20bn a year. All these taxation measures would be 'progressive' in the sense they would divert wealth from the rich to the poor, in contrast to measures such as the government's VAT increase,

which hits the poor hardest.

What else could be cut? Trident? While estimates of the true costs of replacing the Trident nuclear weapon system vary widely, they tend always to come in above £80bn over 25 years. Ending the war in Afghanistan and getting rid of massive consultancy fees on private finance deals would also make a difference.

These are of course political choices. We don't have to live in a world where unemployment co-exists with a long-hours culture in which workers are so stressed that mental health problems are on the rise. We don't have to live in a world where bankers gamble millions across the world in elaborate financial casinos at the same time as 1.4bn people live on less than \$1.25 a day.

We don't have to live in a world where there's no limit to how much of our collective economic output goes to the rich, yet others don't have enough to eat.

It is worth remembering that after the last crisis of this scale and significance in the late 40's, and with public debt something like three and a half times the size it is today, we established the NHS, created the welfare state, put in place comprehensive education and built a vast number of public housing estates.

History tells us there is more than one way out of an economic crisis.

References:

- (1) *IMF World Economic Outlook Database, April 2010*
- (2) *OECD World Factbook 2010*

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Is the coalition conspiring against Crippen?



Crippen, the well known disabled cartoonist and often featured in DISCOVER, has found his blogs and social networking sites have been hacked into several times since he began changing from his more general disability orientated cartoons, to those aimed specifically at the coalition government.

He tells DISCOVER: "It's the blatant disregard the CONDEMs seem to have for all aspects of the lives of disabled people that has focused my recent work more towards this government and its policies. Their slash and burn tactics and indiscriminate cutting away at the services that we rely upon to continue living in the community, is affecting disabled people at every level. Hopefully my cartoons are providing a focus for disabled people who are protesting against these cuts."

Several groups of disabled people have come together in order to provide a vehicle of protest against the government, and have approached Crippen for cartoons to support their protest; specifically those focused on particular areas affected by the cuts, from changes within the health system to the savage cuts to benefits. It's this work that is being targeted by hackers.

Crippen told us: "The people breaking into the blogs have made subtle changes to the dialogue I've constructed to accompany a cartoon, or have changed or removed some of the comments I get back in response. Someone has also hacked into my FaceBook account and has been sending

out misleading messages, supposedly from me to people in my 'friends' folder, again along with changes to my own writing or responses to my posts."

There's also been a successful attempt to have Crippen's cartoons removed from some of the social networking sites. Apparently the cartoon that depicts David Cameron and Nick Clegg with blood on their hands was being taken down as fast as people were posting it up at one stage.

Crippen added: "Whenever this happens I have to change the passwords to these online accounts and try and rectify the changes that have been made. It's all very time consuming and I sometimes wonder if it's worth continuing with this form of communication, but that could be what the people who do this are trying to achieve. Call me paranoid, but this only started when I changed the public focus of my work towards the activities of this government!"

DISCOVER comment: *At the time of going to press Crippen's Facebook site had been hacked again, the password changed and the site closed down. Crippen hasn't decided at this stage whether he has the energy to rebuild the site, but if he does he's promised we'll be the first to know! What do you think? Government conspirators or just worthless mischief-makers? Does Crippen have the right to target the government in his own unique way? Let us know here at DISCOVER.*

Benefit check



What we know at the moment

Well as we all know, the Government have announced considerable changes to the benefit system. Benefits are notoriously complex and the constant stream of announcements adds yet further confusion to an already convoluted picture. Firstly, it's important to note the proposed changes will only be phased in over a number of years, so for many people nothing will alter in the immediate future. Here we try and give you a concise explanation concerning any changes to the most relevant benefits but as always, if you have any questions or queries, please call Disability Cornwall's DIAL service.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

will be replaced by a Personal Independence Payment in 2013/2014 for people of working age. As yet there are no plans to change DLA for children under 16 or for claimants over 65.

The Personal Independence Payment will have two components, one for daily living and one for mobility, both components will have two rates.

The qualifying conditions must be satisfied for six months instead of the current three and must be expected to last for a further six months. Supporting medical evidence will be gathered from an interview with a health professional and there are plans to introduce more periodic reviews.

Removing DLA

from claimants in state funded residential care has now been returned to the drawing board, following the public outcry after it made national headlines.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on incapacity grounds, for new customers from October 2008. Migration for existing claimants is underway and will be completed by March 2014.

When you make an application for ESA you enter a 13 week assessment phase which pays a basic rate. During this phase you will complete a questionnaire and go to a medical assessment. After the assessment phase you can receive one of two additional payments depending on whether you are placed in the work-related activity group or the support group.

Carer's Allowance or Attendance Allowance

has no known changes however, it may be useful to note how other changes could affect you. You can contact DIAL for a full benefit health check if you are concerned.

Universal Credit

is a much longer term project where the intention is to put all benefits and Tax Credits under one roof. In some ways, hallelujah to that! However, at present there are no details of how this will be implemented but we will keep you informed as announcements are made.



The horse's mouth

DISCOVER is launching a new column and as the title suggests, it's a series of quotes worthy of note. This edition we focus on the Big Society and proposed changes to the health service. As always we welcome your contributions, so if you're reading the paper, watching the news, or browsing the web and spot something pithy, relevant, pathetic, cutting or funny, please send it in to us

The idea of the Big Society is a bit like the idea of the Holy Trinity: even when it's explained to you, you still don't really get it.

Stephen Bubb
National Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations

I fear the Government is making the mistake of viewing the Big Society as a mechanism by which people can thrive without requiring investment.

David Orr
National Housing Federation

We need a social recovery to mend a broken society.

David Cameron
Prime Minister

My wife has been replaced at our local hospital by a volunteer. Now we both have no income. If this is the 'big society', then you can keep it.

Chris, Norwich (online blog)

The 'Big Society' already exists. The clever thing is that any social philanthropy will now appear as David Cameron's doing, part of his philosophy. And cleverer still, it allows deep cuts to be masked by a society where things still get done, but now for free...because hordes of pensioners and unemployed public sector workers will be fixing your roads and cleaning your streets for free. Genius. How about a volunteer government?

Mark, Southampton (online blog)

Cameron would like us to think the Big Society characterises his modern Conservative Party - a new, kinder world in which we all pull together for the common good. But the true Tory character was revealed when five 'internships' at city banks

were auctioned to wealthy conservative-supporting parents for their children, with the £14,000 raised going to Tory funds.

Peter McKay
The Daily Mail

If you're asking people to do a big job I don't think you should be afraid of paying them for it.

Kevin Lavery
Cornwall Council

(when challenged over the £45,000 paid to Sir John Banham for 22 days work)

Historically, mental health services have been an easy target for cuts because mental health has been poorly understood and stigmatised. We are most concerned that the mental health workforce should not become deskilled by a lack of training opportunities, or become demoralised by ill-thought out staffing cuts or service closures. These would have a disastrous knock-on effect on individuals, society and the wider economy.

Professor Dinesh Bhugra
Royal College of Psychiatrists

We welcome policy statements by the Conservative Party which have strengthened their commitment to allow new providers of NHS services and for greater freedom for patients to choose their GP and hospital provider.

John Nash
Care UK
(which receives 96% of its income from the NHS)

By giving patients real choice over who they receive care from, we're restoring the balance of power.

Andrew Lansley
Secretary of State for Health

So the budget of the PCTs,
He wants to hand to the GPs, Oh please.
Dumb geeks are gonna buy from any willing provider,
Get care from private companies...
We'll become more like the US,
And care will be farmed out to private companies,
Who will sell their service to the NHS via the GPs,
Who will have more to do with service purchase arrangements,
Than anything to do with seeing their patients.
(Chorus) Andrew Lansley, greedy Andrew Lansley...

Mc NxtGen
(surprise Youtube hit)





Fighting the cuts together in Cornwall

Some voices have criticised what they see as a lack of co-ordinated and sustained protest by Cornish people against cuts to services that will negatively affect communities and 'vulnerable' people.

Now a group called the Cornwall Anti Cuts Alliance have stepped forward to fill the breach, describing themselves as 'a non-political group, where people opposed to the cuts have joined together to raise a united voice in support of alternatives that don't destroy Cornish communities and services.'

The group meets fortnightly at the Railway Club in Truro, to discuss the issues and plan a series of direct actions, to draw attention to the effects of cuts on Cornish communities, including disabled people and those living in poverty.

They are keen to draw in as many people as possible to join together across the political divide, arguing that no matter what your political persuasion, almost everyone has concerns about the scale of the cuts and how they will disproportionately affect those who already struggle to have their social, economic and independent living needs met in Cornwall.

The Alliance has groups on Social Networks such as Twitter, Google and Facebook, just search for

Cornwall Anti Cuts Alliance.

T: 01872 560483

www.cornwallanticutsalliance.wordpress.com

As DISCOVER goes to press, a new group has just been formed. Cornwall Disabled People Against Cuts are working with the Cornwall Anti Cuts Alliance and their first protest was a march to the Truro offices of Atos Origin in May. Contact Chris Gibson for further information.

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*Disability
IT Girl*

Has a dig at the great god democracy

DISCOVER has been approached by people who would like to occasionally write for us but wish to remain hidden behind their avatar. So, in this edition we are pleased to introduce our very own IT Girl who, granted, prefers commenting on which celebs are in the press and all matters relating to retail therapy but, never judge a book by its cover, and for her first literary outing, she takes a deeper look at just how democratic our modern society really is.

Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Iran – all fighting the good fight – the fight for democracy and the freedom to choose. And we in the west have been only too happy to wade in with our support, because we of course are exemplars of democracy, aren't we?

Why we only have to look very close to home to see how democracy works in practice. Cornwall Unitary Authority anyone – we all voted for that didn't we? What do you mean 80% voted against?

The present dismantling of the NHS that will lead to less accountability, not more, as GP's are organised into massive consortia and encouraged to 'profit' through increased 'efficiency', we all

voted for that at the General Election didn't we? We didn't? It wasn't in the Tory manifesto? I'm sure Cameron was quoted as saying "I'll cut the deficit, not the NHS," or maybe I'm imagining things...

I could go on, and on, but you get the picture. The fact is we are under an illusion if we think anything approaching democracy is practised here or anywhere else. Think about it – it is only every five years that we get to choose the country's leadership and what is choice if it is a choice of three?

Yes there are other parties besides the Condems and Labour, but without a bottomless bank account and the mainstream media in their pocket, what chance is there the general population will seriously consider them? Localism is another concern. If disabled people are a minority and our interests are ignored by the majority what are the chances we'll get a fair deal? Democracy is, after all, just mob rule by any other name, and the mob is led by an elite without the remotest idea what it is to live an ordinary life on an ordinary wage, let alone on benefits, too busy or too scared to really rock the political boat.

Too scared? Not too scared to go on a mass rally to protest against cuts no, but well aware that really, what's going to change? A penny off fuel? What a joke – didn't you notice prices at the pump went up 5p in the week before the budget? No, I mean too scared to really rock the political boat, because do you really believe if people in this country protested in the way they've felt necessary in the Middle East, that this government wouldn't put us down in the same way? No? Tell that to Wikileaks's Bradley Manning, in solitary confinement for nine months without trial and subject to forced nudity because he wanted us all to know what is done in our name. Where's democracy for him and the millions out of work, forced into poverty by a government that punishes the victims of its own policies?

Democracy is an illusion, our very own Matrix. As long as we get the occasional steak, like zoo-bred lions, we remain plugged into the machine. If we're lucky we never wake from the reverie, but if like Neo we do, we'd better shape up with an alternative. Remember: no system can be better than the people within.

Do you agree with the IT Girl? Is the fault with democracy itself or those who practise it? Maybe you have an idea for a better alternative? You can reach her at E: discover@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

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Success story



Charlie Ratcliffe, Flash Film and Print

A new baby can be a trying time for most mums, but when that baby has a heart condition, life as you know it is turned upside down. This was Charlie's story when her baby was born 6 years ago.

Working within the creative sector as an artist and teacher, Charlie left a career that she loved to care for her new baby until it was well enough for her to return to work.

"When I returned to work (a management job), I was enrolled on the ESF-funded Empowering Smart Women programme where I realised that I was working in the wrong direction and not fulfilling my creative potential. It was also there that I was recommended to Outset Cornwall."

Charlie's new photography business works with traditional materials and equipment. "I use pin-hole cameras, film cameras, super8 cine film and screen printing to produce images that embrace tradition."

Charlie is currently teaching her craft to school-children through special workshops, and is soon to start offering a special series of workshops for blind and partially-sighted clients.

"Outset gave me the confidence to believe in myself. The programme was inspiring and supportive, and although it can be really scary taking the leap into self-employment, Outset made the process seem simple; ensuring I had looked at all the pitfalls."

FAITH AND THE FAIRY



A schoolgirl with autism has teamed up with her mother to create a fairy story to teach children about her condition. Rosie King, 12, has drawn pixies, fairies and goblins for her mother Sharon's book 'The Daily Journal of Arabella Crumblestone', and £1 of each book sold is donated to the National Autistic Society.

Sharon, 40, wrote the story for children because most books about autism tend to be too factual for youngsters. Rosie came up with the illustrations when her mother was working on the book and Sharon was so impressed she decided to use them. The book tells of a fairy called Arabella who lands on Earth and has to find her way home. She comes across two children, one who has autism, and they help her. The characters are based on Sharon's three children, who all have different physical or emotional conditions.

Two years ago, Rosie diagnosed herself with Asperger's Syndrome when she recognised her symptoms in a book about conditions, which she was reading to understand her younger brother's condition. Rosie is the inspiration for the story's character, Faith, one of the children who befriend

the fairy. While Rosie has now been diagnosed with a mild form of Asperger's (an autistic type disorder characterised by difficulties with social interaction) her brother, Lenny, 8, has classic autism. His book character, George, is also autistic.

Ten-year-old sister Daisy, characterised as the cheeky water fairy Dot, has Kabuki syndrome, a rare condition that produces developmental conditions, such as physical disfigurement and behavioural difficulties.

Sharon, who lives with her family in West Yorkshire said: "In reality, Daisy is not able to speak, but in the book I have given her the words that I feel reflect her fun-loving 'big splash' personality." She says of her son, "He wears us all out with his boundless enthusiasm for life and the mess!"

Sharon added, "I feel honoured to call these children my own. They have taught me so much about what life really means."

**The book is available at
www.sharonkingbooks.co.uk**



Two faced book

Social networking sites may be revolutionising internet communication and creating new and exciting opportunities in both leisure and business, but do they assist disabled people's social inclusion or encourage yet more insidious forms of prejudice and even hate crime?

Facebook has over 500 million users, which is the equivalent of one in every 13 people on our planet today and more than half log-in every day. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, My Space and Bebo have assisted disabled and older people to be connected in a way we have not seen before, connected not just to other disabled users but also to family, friends, co-workers, prospective employers, schools and colleges. This is a huge opportunity for marginalised users to be part of wider community as a whole while interacting on what, in theory, should be a level playing field.

There are also many hundreds of peer support and charity groups for disabled people on these social networking sites including Disability Now, Stop Disability Hate Crime Now and of course our very own Disability Cornwall page.

Here follows two viewpoints on the use of social networking.

Marcus

To me, Facebook is an ideal way to stay in touch with people I would otherwise always mean to phone or write to but never do. Being able to update your status, as you would a diary but for all your friends to see, means you only have to type your news once in order to tell any number of people. A big advantage if, like me, writing or typing takes you a long time.

Most people seem to be on Facebook these days so as long as you know their full name and the combination of the two names isn't too common, you have a good chance of finding them.

To share your news on a more personal level with those friends who are currently online, you can use the chat facility to engage in one-to-one conversations.

I've also found Facebook to be an excellent tool after meeting potential partners. Even if you have the confidence to ask someone for their phone number, most 'attraction manuals' will tell you it's a bad idea to do so. However, people seem much more willing to give out their Facebook details, probably because you can accept or ignore 'friend requests', and once accepted, delete them if need be. Therefore, after meeting someone for the first time and enjoying each other's company, if you ask them if they are on Facebook, they will usually say yes and give you their Facebook details without you actually asking for them. With that all-important contact made, you can comment on their various statuses and use the chat facility to keep the contact going until your next physical meeting, while using the often huge amounts of information on their profile and 'wall' to find out if they're really the type of person you think they are.



2 hours ago • Like • Comment • Share

Marcus mostly illustrates the positive side of Facebook, but there are also hundreds of pages with a 'disablist' slant exposing a serious dark side to cyber socialising. Tom gives us an insight.

Tom

I have mixed feelings about Facebook. I log on almost every day, to catch up with friends or to play Scrabble. I am delighted to be back in touch with people from school and to have made new mates worldwide.

Facebook is a huge network of human beings, however, human beings particularly teenage ones, can be sadly prejudiced about disabled people. The user generated content of Facebook enables ordinary people to create networks and form groups for discussion between those who are like-minded, which is great, most of the time, but depressingly obnoxious some of the time.

For example, there are more than 1,000 groups which include the words 'dwarf' or 'midget' in their title. This includes, but is not limited to, groups like: 'I kick midgets,' 'Dwarfs are for life not just pantomime' and 'Let's ban dwarfs from South Shields beach in summer months.'

Most of these groups have no more than a dozen members and probably drunken student ones at that, but the whole thing is distinctly unsavoury. Particularly when you realise that some of these groups exchange photographs of restricted growth people or refer to 'sightings', none of them with the consent of the individuals concerned. Photographs are posted for mutual amusement and ridicule, and sometimes the addresses of restricted growth people are added. The organisers and members clearly believe they are hilariously funny.

Although the world has improved for disabled people in many ways, this dimension of Facebook is a sad reminder that old attitudes die hard.

A recent campaign organised by members of the Restricted Growth Association resulted in some of the more extreme sites being removed by Facebook, but others have sprung up in their place. Two police forces have been involved, and it's possible that action will be taken in response to behaviour which may infringe the 2003 Criminal Justice Act by inciting hatred and harassment of disabled people.

Clearly, nastiness like this has always happened and many disabled people have heard the same or worse in their own lives. But Facebook and similar social networking sites provide a forum which bored idiots can fill with prejudice. It encourages negative attitudes and quite possibly harassment and physical violence against disabled people.

3 hours ago • Like • Comment • Share

Another downside about social networking sites is they generally exclude many disabled users altogether. AbilityNet took on a piece of research to see how accessible social networking sites were to disabled people, and consulted over 100 people with a diversity of disabling conditions, including vision or hearing impairment, motor, literacy and cognitive difficulties, who access their computers using a wide variety of adaptive hardware and software. None of the sites reviewed – neither Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Yahoo, nor Bebo – would allow login without the identification of a CAPTCHA image, a visual verification code used to determine whether the end user is human. A CAPTCHA image is usually a random display of distorted words or letters which can only be deciphered by people and not by software, but presents barriers for people with visual impairment, dyslexia or learning difficulties. However, if you are able to get past the CAPTCHA image but find reading difficult, Facebook does have a BrowseAloud licence much like the Disability Cornwall website, and the software can be downloaded from the BrowseAloud website.

The world of Facebook can be used for peer support, networking and for many other positive enriching experiences. However, where people are given free rein to add groups and post pictures there is always going to be a risk of abuse.....that's if you can access it in the first place of course.



A typical CAPTCHA image

Councils making cash out of care

Some local authorities are imposing charges for home care services that are so high they must be making a profit from them, according to one leading disabled figure. Sue Bott, Director of the National Centre for Independent Living, said charges for support at home for disabled and older people were far higher than these councils needed to cover their costs.

She spoke out after new research showed hourly charges for support in 2010-11 reached as high as £21.66 an hour in one local authority, with other councils charging £19.80 and £19.70.

The new research – by the consumer magazine Which? – also shows that seven in ten local authorities are restricting support only to people assessed as having critical or substantial needs. Care charges are means-tested and some councils operate a weekly cap on charges, but this can vary from £60 in Barnsley to £550 in Haringey and £850 in Brighton.

The figures were obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests and show that only four of the local authorities provide care to those with low, medium, substantial and critical needs. Three councils provide support only to those with critical needs. Which? contacted 185 local authorities across England and Wales and 154 replied.

Sue Bott said: "Disabled and older people are facing a double whammy of higher charges while also having their support packages cut. The system seems out of control."

The Department of Health (DH) would not say whether it was concerned about the variation in charges and capping, and councils potentially making profits from charging for support. But a DH spokeswoman said charging decisions were the responsibility of local authorities, 'in line with government guidance'.

Original source: Jon Pring
www.disabilitynewsservice.com

CREATIVE IN CORNWALL

CREATIVE MINDS
INSPIRING FUTURES

Working or studying at Falmouth is a unique experience. Our excellent teaching and facilities for Art, Design, Media and Performance, inspirational surroundings and a commitment to improving access and inclusion set Falmouth apart as the perfect place to develop your talent.



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T: 01326 213843 / E: diversity@falmouth.ac.uk
www.falmouth.ac.uk



University College
FALMOUTH
Incorporating Dartington College of Arts



Firestone Rock Band fast tracking Europe

The Firestone Rock Band (FRB) are reported to be one of the six most influential disabled music groups in the UK. Ahead of their time in fact, they have paved the way for disabled people to go and do what they believe in. They have played Leeds, Manchester, Guilfest, the Cornwall's (dis) Ability Awareness Days and almost everywhere in between. Across the channel, they have headlined four times in the Dieppe casino and played big festivals in San Savinien and La Rochelle. The FRB are returning to France in June for the L'Ame de fond festival and playing with two French bands in an open air gig. Sounds fantastic, fingers crossed for the weather!

FRB have had over 40 band members in the many years they have been together who have enjoyed the fun, buzz and hard work of gigging and festivals. It's not all rock and glory, but writing, composing, learning to sing and play as well as lugging heavy gear about – setting up, playing, breaking down and then the long slog home. They certainly are great supporters of the stay up late campaign! Not only do FRB write their own songs, but also perform many of their favourite covers, by REM, Pink Floyd, Buddy Holly and Snow Patrol, to name but a few.

Although FRB have always been part of Surrey adult social care, they are being 'fast tracked' to becoming an emerging social enterprise. FRB now have their own studio and for some time have been working, not only with people with a

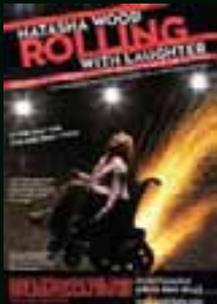
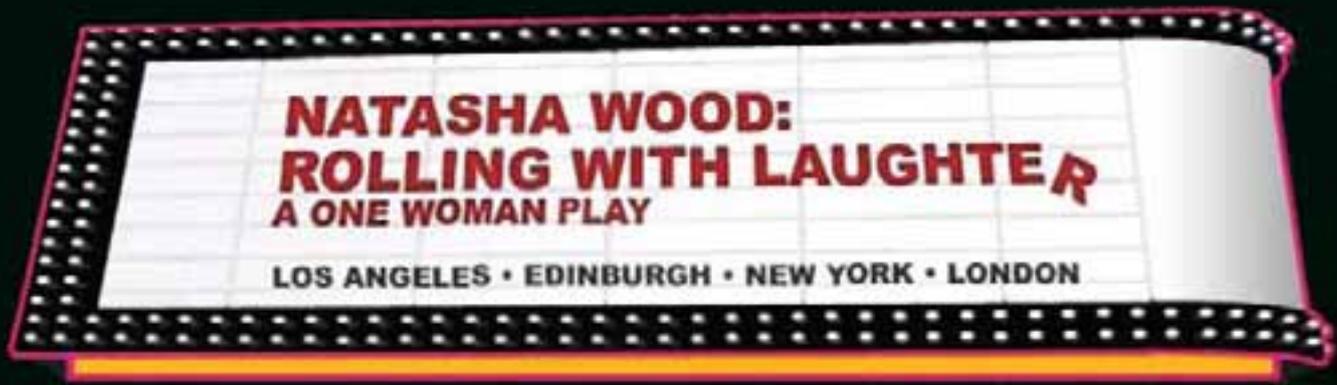
learning difficulty but with adults and children of all ages and abilities, and together have been song writing, composing and recording, djembe drumming and giving access to rock band equipment.

The band have even set up their own recording studio and they work with the local school to record the students' GCSE and BTEC evidence for their exams, which provides a complete role reversal, as the FRB guys become the 'techies' for senior school pupils. This has led to a much greater understanding, broken down many barriers and created opportunities for joint working on both musical and ecological projects.

Watch out for FRB and their new CD 'Fast track' and hear them on myspace.com/frbfirestonerockband.

www.firestonerockband.com





AND A NIP & TUCK ALONG THE WAY!

After a sell out in Nottingham, the Edinburgh Festival and critical acclaim in Los Angeles and the West End, the witty, sassy and determined Natasha Wood brings her hilarious one-woman play back to her home town of Nottingham and its Playhouse. Natasha has had it all - a quirky family, a fairy-tale marriage and dream jobs all over the world. Except that she's lived her entire life from a wheelchair, having been born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), leaving her too weak to lift even a pint of beer. Her story is an empowering, humorous and unique take on life, lingerie and sex, with a little disability thrown in! She tells DISCOVER:

I went to a mainstream school but my brother who also had SMA (he has now sadly passed away) went to a special needs school. When I was a kid in the 70's very little was known about SMA. My Mum was pregnant with me when they found out my brother had it at 18 months old. They knew I had it as soon as I was born.

Growing up, my parents had a market stall selling knickers and bras and I used to sit there in my old, manual wheelchair and the stall was my stage! Mum and Dad are both from real working class backgrounds. Mum was a workaholic glamour girl with double D's and Dad an incredibly warm and funny guy. The house was full of quirky characters. At 13, both myself and my brother had to have operations to straighten our spines otherwise it would have killed us.

I always wanted to be an actress so I studied drama at college. I got my equity card but struggled to find parts because there weren't many around for people in wheelchairs, so I thought I'd get a job behind the scenes instead. I got on a training programme with the BBC and in the first two years I worked on children's TV and shows like Top of the Pops and became a production manager for the BBC, eventually running their New York office.

When I divorced my husband after 14 years and my brother died around the same time, I went through a real emotional period for a while and just thought I need to go and fulfil my dream. So I went to film school in LA and started by writing tales about growing up on a knickers stall and within a few months I'd written a stage play. At first I was told I wasn't Peter Kay, but after months of persuasion, I ended up doing the play in her Majesty's Theatre in front of 800 people and it went on from there.

SMA is the weakening of muscles and because I was born with it I've never known anything else. I need help getting up, with personal care and getting dressed, but once I'm in my chair I'm independent and I can still drive. When I was with my husband it was easier and getting to bed at night only took ten minutes, but now it's an hour long process with a stranger and a hoist.

People with SMA often get respiratory difficulties and that's the most dangerous factor as a common cold can easily turn into pneumonia, so I have to be careful and always have antibiotics at hand. I just try to keep myself physically well by

swimming four times a week. A few years ago I could lift a full cup of tea, now it's only half a cup, so it's important to look after myself. It's a fact I won't reach pension age, but I just try to keep myself as well as I can. I always say the movers and shakers in my spinal chord just aren't moving and shaking!

We tentatively asked Natasha about her age and inspirations and whether she used disability related jokes in her show.

I'm 41 this year and really milked my 40th birthday for all it was worth! June last year was a very busy month with three parties, one in the UK, another in LA and then a big one with 150 people in New York.

Stephen Fry inspires me, but I should point out I'm not a comedian, but a comedy actor. I love Helen Mirren in *Prime Suspect*, Julie Walters, Lenny Henry and Dawn French for comedy and Stephen Fry for intrigue and intellect. I feel very lucky that rolling with laughter is what I do in my life.

There are no jokes, it's a play. It's a story about love, loss, passion and drive. There's sex in it. It's a story of my life but I play all the characters, disability obviously plays a part in that but it's not a focus. There are three poignant moments in the play that are heart wrenching scenes. One is when I split from my husband, another is when I lose my brother and the last is when my service dog retires. The dog is a really funny character and everyone is touched when I finally have to tell him that he'll be retiring. But for the most part the play is funny.

Q. The wheelchair racing athlete Tanni Grey-Thompson was once unable to collect her award at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards due to lack of access to the stage. Have you ever had this kind of experience?

No, I just go where it's accessible. I had no dressing room in Her Majesty's Theatre because they were all downstairs. I got ready in the corridor but wasn't bothered because I was fulfilling a dream and just felt lucky to be there. They built a ramp for me to get on stage but I'm not bothered when I can't access somewhere because I know the complexity of stages

and the money involved in changing things. There are many old theatres that don't have the capacity to be accessible.

Q. How challenging do you find your career as a disabled woman?

I don't really and feel very lucky to have achieved so much in my life. I haven't really felt discriminated against. I didn't go to university but ended up a production manager for the BBC, living in America, meeting people like Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet, doing my play and fulfilling a dream.





Q. What plastic surgery have you had?

I had my boobs done about 7 years ago because I wanted to even out the hump

on my back! I was always stuffing my bra with socks when I was younger. I had the surgery so I could have more symmetry in my body. Before I could only wear certain clothes, now I like to have my puppies on show, what's the point in not when I've spent all that money on them?

Q. Wheelchair users often say they feel invisible, do you?

I never feel like that and feel blessed to have worked abroad and to have done what I have. Whenever we had a difficult moment growing up we dealt with it with humour.

I've spent a lot of time working with young disabled adults and support both children and adults in the Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy. I feel for them today as there seems to be a lot more prejudice and bullying. I get the impression it's harder these days but then again there are a lot more opportunities in terms of care packages. When I was 18, I moved into an old peoples care home for three years whilst on the waiting list for independent living. Most people might think that was awful but I absolutely loved it. For the first time in my life I felt I had independence, staying up until 3am and not having to worry about my Mum putting me to bed, although I did have to put up with catching the 88 year old opposite masturbating everyday! If I could give kids these days one piece of advice it would be to use humour and just laugh it off!

I was once flying out to LA from Heathrow and the 60 year old attendant that was meant to be helping me spoke to my friend rather than me when asking how to lift me. I could have made a scene but I just said 'Well you're a handsome man and I'm quite a handful you know, I might need a few of you!' He just burst out laughing and we shared a lot of jokes after that. I didn't even think, just dealt with the situation as I always had.

Q. Do you feel like a role model for disabled women in terms of showing the world that disabled women are sexy?

I'm passionate we should see people with visible disabilities on the high street, which is why I did the Gok Wan show 'How to Look Good Naked With a Difference'. The high street has just started to

use plus size models and people from minority groups, so why shouldn't we see disabled people? Just because you have a physical disability it doesn't mean you're not sexy. We need to show we are beautiful.

Q. Did you face any practical difficulties in getting your surgery due to your disability?

There are always risks involved in surgery whether you are disabled or not and I was stronger back then. I had a lovely surgeon but had to jump through all the hoops including lung function tests. I felt fantastic afterwards, it's made me feel positive.

Q. What would you say to other disabled people thinking of having plastic surgery?

It's not a question of whether you are disabled, it's whether you are fit for surgery. Make sure you get a recommendation for the surgeon but any surgery is a risk whether you are abled bodied or not.

Q. What do you think about media pressure on women to conform?

Every time I go into a shop, read magazines or turn on the TV, it's 'Oprah's fat, now she's thin, now she's fat!' It's difficult for youngsters these days. I'm not influenced by media pressure, I have a fitness regime and eat well because I want to be fit and mentally strong.

Q. Have you noticed a change in attitude towards disabled people in the last few years?

Working with young adults, it seems there is a lot more bullying. My parents had to fight to get me into mainstream school but there seems to be more support these days. We have more representation now on television, radio and in magazines like yours. It's also much easier to access places and public transport.

I'm not an activist but am truly grateful to those that are because it all helps in improving services. I certainly appreciate their passion.





Court rules no protection for disabled volunteers

The Court of Appeal has ruled that disabled people are not protected by domestic or European legislation from discrimination when they undertake voluntary work

In this decision the specific question was whether a volunteer at a Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau was protected from disability discrimination. The anonymised claimant 'Mrs X', argued that CAB had terminated her role as a volunteer adviser because she was HIV positive. She claimed:

1. There was a breach of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 when read with Directive 2000/78/EEC, which establishes a framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.
2. The Directive itself gave her enforceable rights not to be discriminated against due to her disability.

But the court found she was not protected by the DDA because she was unpaid and did not have a contract. The court also found that volunteers were not protected by the European Union's equal treatment directive.

Alex Eastwood, a legal caseworker for the Disability Law Service said: "Employers will have no duty to make adjustments for disabled volunteers or take steps to prevent harassment of volunteers."

The current economic climate will inevitably lead to more people undertaking volunteer work in the hope of securing an elusive job at some point in the future. As such, this decision will affect a large, and growing, group of people. The case has already generated controversy, with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, who intervened in the case on the side of Mrs X, saying in a Guardian article – *Given that many employees begin their working life as volunteers, providing them with valuable experience which they can use as a step up to paid employment, it seems unfair that certain groups of people can legally be denied this experience.*

The case may ultimately reach the Supreme Court to decide whether to extend protection to volunteers, or simply agree that if the legislators had intended such protection, it would have been explicitly included in the Disability Discrimination Act.

Liz Conroy of Conroy's Solicitors, Truro, told DISCOVER: "It follows from the case that many volunteers are not protected by the employment provisions of the Equality Act, unless the volunteer has a legal contract, is undertaking work experience or other similar vocational training, if the organisation uses voluntary work as a means of assessing an individual's suitability for particular work, is a special constable or public officer holder.

She added, "It's also possible a volunteer undertaking a volunteering opportunity provided by an organisation may come under the protection offered to disabled people in relation to provision of goods and services. This is untested ground and I am not aware of a case on this point – yet."

DISCOVER comment: Legislation works both ways and volunteers without contracts are free to give or withdraw their time without the same disciplinary processes that would apply if they were employees. But, given the Big Society will depend on the efforts of volunteers giving their unpaid time to 'good causes', one wonders how many will be willing to come forward when they are afforded so little protection under the law?

Short information films



Taking the dread out of dementia

By: LINK in Cornwall

Duration: Part 1–11 minutes & Part 2–13 minutes

Content: In November last year, LINK in Cornwall welcomed 160 people to their event at the Eden Project, supported by NHS Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The short film documents the day and provides information on the support for dementia available in Cornwall.

Further information is available from the Cornwall Rural Community Council.

T: 01872 273952

www.cornwallrcc.org.uk



It's time to talk, it's Time to Change

By: Time to Change

Duration: 4 minutes

Content: Mental health issues affect one in four people and are likely to affect everyone at some point in our lives whether it's stress, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, eating disorders or schizophrenia.

Time for Change is a Campaign set up to stamp out mental health discrimination and is endorsed by people such as Frank Bruno and Trisha Goddard. Its aim is to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental health problems and to say it's time we are all able to talk openly about mental health.

www.time-to-change.org.uk



Filmmaking project for people with learning difficulties

By: Cornwall Film Festival & Cornwall Development Company

Duration: 3 minutes

Content: The Cornwall Film Festival website features three short films made and featuring people with learning difficulties. Cornwall Film Festival is running a pilot scheme this year to enable people with learning difficulties and their carers to make short films.

The project began with a filmmaking master class at Cornwall College led by the Oska Bright Committee, an international Film Festival run by and for people with learning difficulties. This session was open to groups from across Cornwall and included participants from the Blantyre Centre in St Austell and the John Daniel Centre in Penzance.

Further information is available from the Cornwall Film Festival.

T: 01209 204655

www.cornwallfilmfestival.com/filmmaking-project-people-learning-difficulties



Energy Best Deals

By: Citizens Advice Bureau

Duration: 3:08 minutes

Content: As part of the Energy Best Deal scheme, Citizens Advice and Ofgem have been working together to help consumers with energy advice. They have produced a series of short films showing how you can reduce your energy costs and what help is available if you are struggling to pay your energy bills.

Further information is available from the Citizens Advice Bureau

T: 08444 111444

www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/energy_best_deal_videos



Ysella with her three brothers and her mum, Chloe

Ysella's Voice

The family of a young girl from Newlyn, Penzance, with profound disabilities has launched an appeal to help her express herself. Ysella Reeves has a serious condition which has baffled doctors seeking a diagnosis, and leaves her needing round-the-clock care.

The Ysella's Voice campaign aims to raise funds to purchase a computer to read the four-year-old's eye movements. It's hoped the gaze-controlled device, which costs up to £17,000, will help Ysella explain her needs to her parents Chloe and Olly. With symbols like; mum, dad, food or even my tummy hurts and I need turning, it could provide Ysella with a means of communication for the first time.

The campaign was recently given a boost by local residents and people as far afield as Wales after reading an article about Ysella in The Cornishman newspaper.

Chloe, 29, says her daughter has rapidly got to grips with the special computer they've been lent to test by Curnow Community special needs school in Redruth. "Ysella got it straight away;

she is so switched on," she said with pride. "Her eyes are really good at following."

Ysella has problems breathing and needs a suction device to compensate for her weak swallow reflex, but has yet to be diagnosed with a specific disorder.

A neurologist has offered to share her details with specialists around the world in the hope of finding answers to her condition which could bring some peace of mind to her parents.

Chloe, who is also mum to nine-year-old Leo, Josh, 7, and Thomas, 6, is hoping to host a special fundraising party for her 30th birthday in June, so her daughter can finally let people into her world.

If you would like to donate to the appeal any donation, no matter how small, will be gratefully received. Please send cheques made payable to Ysella Reeves c/o

Disability Cornwall

Units 1G/H Guildford Road Ind. Estate,
Guildford Road, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4QZ

Greater choice Personal Budget

Introduction

Health and social care is changing dramatically. There is a move towards personalised services, with the service user (i.e. me and you) placed at the centre in deciding how and when we would like our needs met.

Legislation such as Putting People First (2007) presented this transformation which allows people to self-direct, manage and control their support through personal budgets. This aim was reinforced in 2008 with the Independent Living Strategy, which stated disabled people should have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people.

Most people would prefer to live independently at home and personal budgets can help achieve this. By self directing your support you have greater choice and control over your life. Personal budgets can be a more attractive proposition than receiving traditional care services, especially with the right support and without having to jump through bureaucratic hoops. In addition to meeting care requirements, personal budgets can pay for leisure, social and other activities which enable you to live more actively and independently.

You can manage your budget in different ways; employ a personal assistant, use an agency (but still stipulate when and what staff do), be imaginative and ask a neighbour or a friend to take you to a social club or gym, or choose to have all or part of your services arranged by the council, (but with less flexibility). Put simply, the days of being put to bed at 7pm because that's the only time the agency provided by the council can visit you are gone!

The important thing is getting the right support to enable you to take on the budget. Whether it's help from an organisation who will manage your payroll, help to recruit a PA, advise you on employer responsibilities, even manage your account, or just someone at the end of the phone to offer reassurance, no one wants to feel alone when taking on something new.

Disability Cornwall provides these services and many are free, such as a friendly ear, information, advice and support from our dedicated advisers and an employer support information pack, and others are offered at very competitive rates.

Here we simplify the process. From April, everyone eligible for support will have a personal budget, whether a newcomer or an existing service user, and this is what you need to know.

Frequently asked questions

Who will get a personal budget?

A personal budget is available to people who, following an assessment of their needs and financial position, are eligible for support from the local authority. From April 2011, everyone who receives social care support will get a personal budget following their next review.

Will I get less care & support when I change to a personal budget?

When you are reviewed, your care and support will be reassessed so the amount needed should reflect the latest assessment of your needs.

Can children receive a personal budget?

Not at the moment, this is being piloted elsewhere in the UK but there are no plans to trial anything in Cornwall at present.

What can I spend my personal budget on?

This is up to you. However, it must be legal and meet your eligible needs and objectives identified in your support plan! Personal budgets delivered by a payment direct into your bank account will be subject to rules. Some people use their money to employ a personal assistant to help with personal care or everyday tasks such as shopping or going to work. It can also be used for activities which help maintain your health and independence such as visiting the gym, swimming, voluntary work, training or employment.

If I choose to employ someone does this make me an employer?

Yes. If you pay people to work for you, that makes you an employer. Your responsibilities will be discussed with you if you choose to manage your personal budget yourself. There is help available to assist you. You can access Disability Cornwall's Employer Support Information Pack via our website www.disabilitycornwall.org.uk/personal-budgets-service

I don't want to employ a stranger, can I pay a relative?

Yes, as long as they do not live in the same house as you, although in exceptional circumstances, the council may allow this arrangement.

e more control gets explained

Is a personal budget taxable and will it affect any benefits I might receive?

No. A personal budget does not count as income for tax or benefit purposes.

What if I need help to manage my support or money?

A suitable organisation, a family member or a friend could help you.

Do I have to manage my personal budget myself?

No. You have a choice about how you organise and manage your personal budget, see the options below.

There are three ways to manage your personal budget

Option One: A payment made direct to your designated bank account

You can have your personal budget as a cash payment into the bank account you opened specifically to manage your budget. You use the money to organise, buy and manage your agreed support. You are responsible for paying for your support from this money, as well as managing and recording everything you spend.

Option Two: Managed Personal Budget

Money is not paid to you. The council manages this for you and will organise, pay for and manage your agreed support in a traditional way on your behalf.

Option Three: Combination Personal Budget

You may choose to use a combination of options one and two.

Further information is available from:

Adult Care & Support
T: 0300 1234131



DIAL
T: 01736 759500



Age Concern Cornwall
T: 01872 266388



6 steps to your personal budget

Step 1

You will receive a visit from a case coordinator. Whether this is your first visit or a review/reassessment, together you will agree your needs, discuss what you want to achieve and how you do this. You may receive a second visit to complete a financial assessment which determines whether you need to make a contribution to your budget.



Step 2

Taking into account your needs, the local authority will calculate the cost, known as your 'indicative budget'.



Step 3

You will now create a 'support plan'. This sets out how you will achieve what you need and who will help you do that. i.e. employ a PA for 15 hours per week to meet your personal care needs, engage a cleaner, arrange to go swimming or to the gym once a week.



There are seven key areas your support plan must address: 1) What is important to you 2) What do you want to change 3) How will you get the support you need 4) How will you use your personal budget 5) How will you manage your support 6) How will you stay in control of your life 7) What are you going to do to make your support plan happen. You can develop the plan yourself, with your case coordinator, or with the help of family or friends.

Step 4

You will agree and sign off your support plan with your case coordinator and wait for confirmation that your personal budget has been authorised and in place.



Step 5

You are ready to go! If you have chosen to manage your budget you can start planning what services you will buy and who from. If the council is providing services for you, they will arrange this.



Step 6

You can expect a review after around eight weeks to make sure everything is going ok and then on an annual basis.



Personal Budgets Support Service

Everyone who receives a social care service from Cornwall Council will be given a personal budget following their next review. In addition to ensuring your personal care needs are met, the budget can be used for you to engage with lifestyle and social opportunities.

At Disability Cornwall we believe this is a great opportunity for full choice and control over all aspects of your life.



Our friendly team provide a range of affordable and professional services to support you, should you choose to manage your own budget.

- ◆ Information, advice & support
- ◆ Payroll
- ◆ Employer Support
- ◆ Managed Accounts
- ◆ Information Events
- ◆ Information Pack



We need Personal Assistants!

We are developing a register of PA's. If you think you have the skills and attributes required to enable people to live an independent lifestyle please contact us.

Our professional and friendly service is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Contact Sharon Riley T: 01736 756655

E: sharon@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

Do it right. Commission the experts

Who cares who provides services so long as public, private and civil society organisations put those they are providing for first

The comprehensive spending review has struck fear in the hearts of those who provide public services and those who rely on them. But we should all be afraid of the ramifications of cutting public services. Evidence points to the fact the most successful societies are those with the strongest public services, which in turn create a resilient population.

If the 'big society' can give power to communities and individuals, while also saving costs, then the concept must be lauded. However, it has faced criticism for being a thin veil for draconian spending cuts and an excuse for the state to retreat, leaving communities in the lurch.

It does not have to be like that. One important aspect of the big society is the chance to create new relationships between public services and their users. For the idea to be effective, perceptions of public services need to be radically changed. Critical to success is the quality of how services are commissioned.

Commissioning is perhaps one of the most misunderstood pieces of jargon in the public services' field. Favoured by professionals, the term means nothing to the people it's meant to serve. It's often used as a synonym for procurement within public services, which has created a tendency to confuse the funding and allocation of public services with their provision.

Our public sector agencies are labyrinthine, where the needs and choices of most users of public services do not fit neatly into services' institutional boundaries. Commissioning must have the needs and choices of service users at its heart in order to provide the most appropriate services. This means having the sustained and genuine involvement of service users, which in many cases should be based on

individuals and communities commissioning their own services directly from providers. Where this isn't possible, the public sector must ensure its services are focused entirely on users' real needs.

More public bodies are starting to ask service users for their input, but many in the most deprived communities report they never find out the results. This is exploitative. People are expected to contribute without ever seeing a positive change in their services.

It doesn't matter who provides services, but public, private and civil society (voluntary sector) organisations must stand on an equal footing when competing to deliver them. They should be judged according to their ability to achieve user-focused outcomes, not on which sector they are from. By tying community engagement directly to service provision, there is the potential to build the networks that create a feeling of belonging in a place.

Our vision of commissioning is not a threat to the respect given to public services or those working in them. What is threatening public services is uncertainty over future funding and sustainability.

Nevertheless, the virtues of user-focused commissioning will not excuse poor performers. Processes must be in place for any provider to lose a contract if they are unable to achieve targets.

We want greater collaboration between public sector organisations to ensure services are focused on service users, rather than being limited to institutional boundaries and cultures. Individuals and communities would be able to see the direct effects of commissioning.

But the full benefits of user-focused commissioning will only be realised by taking a long-term view, there is too much at stake to only be motivated by short-term cost-saving. Authorities need to recognise the positive assets within communities and act to ensure they can be expressed to the best advantage.

By Lord Victor Adebawale, Chief Executive of Turning Point and John Tizard, Director of the Centre for Public Service Partnerships



BIG IMPROVEMENTS TO HELSTON EASY ACCESS ROUTE

It's great to be able to report we have made a lot of progress since the Penrose Estate was featured as an Easy Access Route in DISCOVER.

We have just celebrated further improvements to the surface of the Helston Drive footpath, which leads to Loe Pool and are now over half-way, with hopes the whole section could be completed within the next three years.

An extra 600m have now been resurfaced and we really appreciate all the support for the new access improvement works.

Since the original article in DISCOVER, we received a number of contacts from visitors as a result of the access route being highlighted, and lots of good feedback about the work then completed. The article really helped put Penrose on the map in terms of sharing access opportunities and networking with other groups and individuals to work together so we can continue making improvements

This year we hope to become involved with South West Mobility and have a Tramper mobility scooter in place and operational.

Mike Hardy
Head Ranger, Penrose Estate
National Trust

CRACKDOWN ON AGENCIES

Cornwall deserves a better care standard, the best it has to offer and that's why I'm writing this letter.

Over the space of several years I have been with three different agencies and on a number of occasions staff haven't turned up, including this

New Year, leaving me without care on New Year's Eve and Day. The agencies have sent carers who are not qualified and some don't even have basic training.

In one instance, I almost fell from the hoist after only three of four sling straps had been connected, a basic error. I felt the carer was incompetent but perhaps the individual involved hadn't received adequate training? Agencies need better training and use basic care plans, for every client's home, so workers know what they're doing.

I think most agencies over-charge the client. For example, in my case I was charged £139 for a 'waking night' by an agency, compared with £40 per night for a Personal Assistant. This is ridiculous.

Service users often don't know what time agency staff are coming in, as they often don't arrive on time, sometimes I have to wait for almost an hour! This is really frustrating as they should be bound by a duty of care to provide a service, otherwise it's a form of neglect. After meeting with the agency manager and explaining my concerns, I don't feel confident they'll act on the issues I've raised.

Cornwall's care system will become a bloodbath because agencies don't know what they're doing. They over-charge, fail to turn up promptly, or at all, and don't provide adequate training to their staff.

This is my own personal view and doesn't necessarily reflect the views of any organisation I am involved with.

T. Hocking
Hayle



IS THERE ANY VALUE IN VOLUNTEERING FOR THE BIG SOCIETY?

Until recently I worked as a support worker for people with mental health issues, many of whom needed on-going and critical interventions to prevent already fractured lives from falling apart. In February I was called into the office and told that, due to cuts in funding, there would no longer be a job for me after April 1st. Interestingly, I was told I was welcome to stay on as a volunteer, as my skills were still very much needed, they just couldn't afford to pay me for them!

I couldn't help remembering a news item about Cornwall Council, who paid Sir John Banham over £45,000 for 22 days work, and Kevin Lavery's response to the subsequent criticism, "If you are asking people to do a big job I don't think you should be afraid of paying for it." I'm just wondering what qualifies as a big job in these days of Big Society? Given that it's all about volunteers giving their time for good causes rather than a salary, there seems to be something of a contradiction going on here! On the one hand volunteers will be the mainstay of our Brave New World propping up society with their good will, on the other, we have public sector chiefs implying if you don't get paid for it, the job you do it isn't of any value!

Can someone please enlighten me? Or maybe it might be better to enlighten those whose job it is to implement what seems to be becoming a Big Bad Joke on ordinary people? I thought I did a big job for my modest salary. As a volunteer it appears I will be worthless.

Name & address supplied

THE LAST ISSUE OF DISCOVER

I just wanted to let you know that I have read my copy of DISCOVER (sadly I have left Cornwall and it was forwarded to me) and it was like being on an emotional roller-coaster! What are you trying to do to your readers?

Firstly I was angry by the article on the so-called 'new' government's money-saving scheme (Where's Robin Hood when you need him) and like a lot of other disabled people I'm worried the wrong members of our society will be affected.

Then I read Katie's article (Disordered mind difficult relationship) and I'm in tears. And then to top it off you have your feature story (Get yer rocks off!) Well, put it this way, if my mother had been around when I received it she would have gone red in the face and so would I, but for different reasons!

Well done to all, a brilliant magazine as usual!

Google Girl
Kent

COMMENTS ON NEW DISABILITY CORNWALL WEBSITE

Congratulations to all concerned on the wonderful new website. Even though you were off line for quite some time this has definitely been worth waiting for. I have spent over two hours this evening looking at it. I think it will prove to be a great asset to your organisation.

Well done to the staff at Disability Cornwall for all their valuable input.

TT

Wow, this is looking amazing, well done to all of you, I look forward to telling everyone about it. 'My Place' is brilliant.

I love the colours and the entry page picture is lovely. Also love the changing pictures on the right hand side. Thank you

SK

It would be great to hear from you

Citizens journalism is what DISCOVER is all about, so please keep sending us your letters.

When our readers write to us regarding their issues of concern, they can rest assured a copy of DISCOVER is sent directly to the service provider in question if appropriate, highlighting their letter and requesting a response.

Please note we will do our best to publish your letters in future editions but they may be shortened or edited for clarity.

Working with disabled people for positive change



Our vision is a world where disabled people are able to enjoy their rights and participate in society as fully as they choose.

Our mission is to support disabled people to challenge disability discrimination.

Action on Disability & Development International (ADD) works as an ally to the disability movements in Africa and Asia. Since 1985, ADD has played a key role in facilitating disabled people to come together, make decisions about their own lives and to campaign for their rights.

Through offices in seven countries, ADD works in eleven countries in Africa and Asia: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, India, Mali, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

ADD works with disabled people through organisations that range from small village groups to large national federations. Some disabled people's organisations are made up of people with different impairments, while others have come together through a shared experience, for example deaf people or disabled women.

In poor countries, disabled people are affected by the same issues as everyone else, such as going to school, receiving basic health care and being able to earn a living. What makes these issues more challenging for disabled people is the discrimination and stigma they face. This is why disabled people are some of the poorest, most marginalised people in any society.

To achieve long-lasting positive change, ADD supports disabled people's organisations to become strong and effective, able to promote the rights of all disabled adults and children and to call on governments, other organisations and society to end disability discrimination.

T: 01373 473064
www.add.org.uk



A man wearing glasses and a blue shirt is riding a blue bicycle on a dirt road. He is carrying a large white sign with red and blue text. The sign reads: "DISABLED PERSONS CAN PERFORM IF GIVEN THE CHANCE". The background shows a rural setting with trees and brick buildings under a clear sky.

**DISABLED PERSONS
CAN PERFORM
IF GIVEN
THE CHANCE**

Splashing out for a new pool

Planning permission has been granted and a 25 year lease obtained from Cornwall Council to build a much needed hydrotherapy pool at The John Daniel Centre in Penzance, which provides day care services for around 100 students with physical and learning difficulties.

Hydrotherapy is proven to be a highly effective form of natural therapy which works by stimulating endorphins to help control pain and alleviate tension.

The pool needs to be onsite for the comfort, privacy and dignity of the students, but will also be available to other disabled people. The building

will be a log cabin, which as well as the pool, will include changing facilities and a dry room for physiotherapy.

A decade of resolute campaigning and fundraising has raised over £102,000 but around £330,000 is needed to complete the project. If DISCOVER readers can help in any way by holding fundraising events, helping on a stall, or would like to make a donation please contact Roy Mann. Thank you.

T: 01736 351134



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Disabled people's organisation delivers inspirational training



Mid Cornwall Lifestyles (MCL), a disability support charity based in Bodmin, was recently appointed the lead employer in a consortium for the adult social care sector, to deliver the Society, Health & Development Diploma to GCSE & A level students across three schools in North Cornwall and Devon.

Assisted by a grant from the European Social Fund, a group was formed consisting of staff, volunteers, trustees and individual disabled people. MCL Manager, Barry Marsh said: "Armed with a copy of the course specification, a huge box of tea bags and some biscuits, we sat down to write and deliver a course at a professional standard, that would appeal to 30 students aged 14-18, while integrating the ideas of service users and improving their skill sets and self esteem."

Student handbooks, resources and assessments had to be developed, while actual 'service users' gave real life and personal accounts of how their lives were before and after the introduction of

legislation providing increased rights. This gave all students the chance to hear primary accounts, and one student from Holsworthy Community College said; "Hearing the details of how a bad situation has been and then turning it into something positive, is so inspirational. Getting the chance to listen to real case studies has really opened my eyes."

To make the course something the students would remember, Barry Marsh reduced 'dry' module elements by introducing assessment via the production of information boards, presentations and focus group discussions. This holistic approach made a fun four days for everyone involved, and the final presentations the students gave confirmed the information delivered was well received and understood.

Certificates were presented to both students and the disabled people involved gaining wider key skills qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4.

LUaN

The LinkUpArtists's Network is for career disabled artists based in the South West and funded by the Arts Council's Impact Programme. It was designed specifically so artists have opportunities for professional and artistic exchange to create a greater sense of cohesion in the region. Although artists for the current programme of meetings have now been selected, you can still register your interest. To find out more please contact the co-ordinator Trish Wheatley.

T: 07766 76980

E: linkupartistsnetwork@gmail.com



Using the Law to Fight the Cuts to Disabled Children's Services

A paper to aid understanding of how the law can be used to help fight cuts to valued services for disabled people. The paper is intended as a guide only and anyone considering legal action should seek specialist advice.

T: 0800 1216568

www.irwinmitchell.com

usemyability

A new website has been developed by the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support, partnered by the Universities of Gloucestershire and Plymouth. The Employability and Disability National Teaching Fellowship Scheme project has launched UseMyAbility, aimed at assisting students to develop their employability skills.

T: 01905 855402

www.usemyability.org

Shallal Dance Theatre

Are now holding 'Friends and Dancing' sessions at the Dracaena Centre in Falmouth every Wednesday. They run from 10.30am-12.00 noon and only cost £2 or a donation.

T: 01326 375867

www.shallal.org.uk



Karen's Angels

Reliable and friendly Accessible Transport

If you are visiting London and worried about accessing public transport, Karen's Angels is a transport service for disabled people and for a small cost Karens Angels will drive you.

www.karensangelsonline.com/index.html

Cross-border healthcare ruling for Europe

The European Parliament has passed the Cross-border Health Care Directive, which will allow EU residents to seek healthcare treatment in any of the 27 member states, from 2013. The cost of the treatment will be reimbursed by the health service in the patient's home country. The directive will benefit patients on long waiting lists or with a rare condition requiring specialist treatment.



Samba Band taster sessions

Robert Owen Communities is offering free Samba taster sessions for adults with learning difficulties and then subsequent opportunities to participate in a Samba Band. Sessions run every Saturday morning at

the Centre in Cardrew Road, Redruth from 10.00am-12.00 noon. No previous experience is necessary and equipment is provided. There is no need to book, just quote DC03/11 when you arrive.

T: 01872 560530

The Hall for Cornwall



Truro's theatre, which has brought everything from rock concerts and pantomime to West End productions to Cornwall have now made their brochures available in both large print and on audio CD.

T: 01872 262466

www.hallforcornwall.co.uk



Message in a bottle

The Bottle in the Fridge initiative is an emergency information scheme currently provided free of charge via the Lions club throughout Cornwall. It gives you the means to alert the emergency services to important medical information and contact details, should an accident or sudden illness occur.

The fridge has been chosen to store the bottles, as 95% of all households have one and it's generally easy to find. Also, the insulation properties and construction of a fridge mean that in the event of a fire, the contents of the fridge usually survive.

In addition to the actual bottle, the pack consists of a basic medical information form and green & white emergency data link stickers, which are unique to the scheme.

You complete the form with all of your relevant medical information and put this in the bottle, which you then place in your fridge. You put one of the stickers just inside your front door, so that it's clearly visible to any of the emergency services and one goes on your fridge. The green & white stickers are recognised by the emergency services.

You shouldn't put a sticker on the exterior of your property as the emergency services will know to look for one inside your front door. If more than one person in your household has a bottle, attach a photograph to the medical form, so that the emergency services can easily identify whose bottle it is.

Contact DIAL, your local Lions Club or your GP for a bottle in the fridge pack.

Decisions Decisions



A useful DVD and board game if you work with people with learning difficulties, as it helps understanding of the Mental Capacity Act.

The Care Quality Commission states that 'Everyone working in health and social care who makes decisions for people who lack capacity has a duty to know about and follow the act's codes of practice.'

The DVD and board game are tools to use when working in small groups to explain the key principles of the act. The resources are accessible and fun and have been widely used by people with learning difficulties and the people supporting them. Health and social care students will also find them useful in explaining the act.

'Decisions Decisions' DVD costs £25 and the board game £49.99. You will obtain a 25% discount if you quote DISCOVER when ordering.

E: orders@friendlyresources.org.uk

Using care services

Find out how to get started with using health and social care services and what you need to do to find the right care service for you. This booklet, published by the Care Quality Commission provides advice on different types of care, information to help you choose the right care for you, where to find local services and tells you the standards you should expect when receiving health & social care.

T: 03000 616161

www.cqc.org.uk/usingcareservices.cfm

Free talking books

You can now download audio books free to your home PC or MP3 via the Cornwall Council library website. All you need is your library membership number.

www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22701





Easily Accessible Routes

Although it may not sound the most exciting you will get three for the price of one! There is a walk around the duck pond itself, an option to continue to a small park and a visit to the Snowland Angling & Riding Centre just a little further along the road and situated behind the duck pond & park

Par duck pond

KEY FACTS

- **Directions:** Approaching from Truro on the A390 continue past St Austell to St Blazey. After the Four Lords pub on your right look for a right turn on a lefthand bend, signed Par. This is the A3082 and goes downhill with a Somerfield supermarket at the bottom on your left. Go straight across the unusual triangular junction bearing right over the level crossing and after a short while the entrance will be on your right. Snowland is the next right before the railway bridge starts to rise. If you reach a pub on your left you have gone too far.
- **Parking:** In the car park next to the pond.
- **Terrain:** Easy. Predominantly off-road.
- **Distance:** 1.3km and will take less than an hour.
- **Refreshments:** In the main village, including the Four Lords pub.
- **Public Toilets:** Accessible toilets at Snowland.
- **Ordnance Survey Map No:** OS Explorer 107 with a grid reference for the car park of SX 075544.

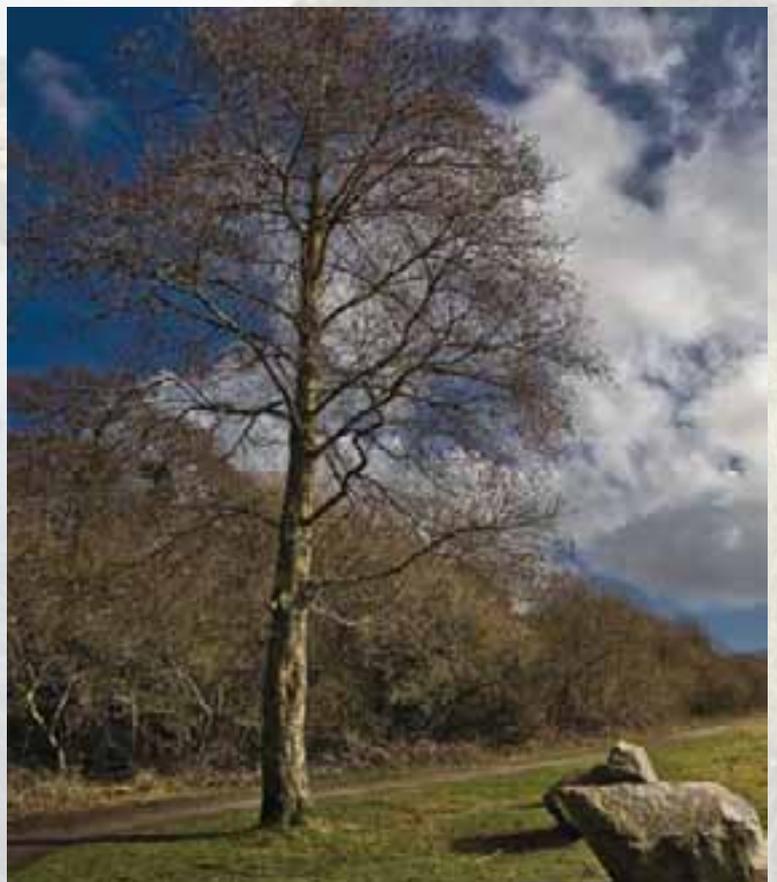




➤ **ALONG THE WALK**

Start in the small car park with an unsealed but fairly flat surface. Go back on yourself towards the road and start your walk around the duck pond by taking the path between the stone pillars on your right. You will soon come to a wooden bridge and there is a shallow step onto it from both sides, and although it shouldn't present too great a problem, it's frustrating to see as it would be so easy to correct.

The path has an unsealed flat surface with nice views of the pond and accompanying wildlife. Follow the path around the pond and you soon come to another bridge which is smoother to traverse than the first. There is then a sealed path for the short distance back to the car park.



From the car park, take the sealed path past the farm gate and follow it to a large grassy area. The path itself is flat, in good condition and accessible to wheelchair users, but it could become muddy after a spell of wet weather.

Continue around the grassy area and the path will lead you to the river bank where you turn right towards the road. However, the riverbank on your left is also flat and technically accessible and you could follow this if you wish. Bear in mind it's unsealed and can easily become muddy.

When you get to the road, you need to cross it to get onto the pavement on the other side. A level crossing will be on your immediate left and you need to head right, walking along the road, the C0067. Please take care when you actually cross as cars come along this road fairly quickly. The duck pond will be on your right hand side and you will soon see the entrance.



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Communication with patients improving



The Primary Care Trust has set out to reduce inequality in services, by reviewing the way it communicates with patients and introducing a variety of new methods for accessing information. This work will tackle some of the barriers that face disabled people across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

"This is a major piece of work for the NHS community" says Kate Milton, Equality and Diversity Manager for NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. "This programme is starting to make positive inroads into some of these access issues and will continue for as long as people tell us they are encountering barriers."

"The starting point for this work is equality, that means giving people equal rights and equal access by adapting the way we work to be more inclusive," said Kate. "We need to harness new technology as much as possible while at the same time ensuring traditional aids such as Braille and large-print formats are widely available too."

Initiatives which are underway

- The introduction by The Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust of yellow medicine labels to assist visually impaired people in reading their medication, as evidence shows the contrast of black writing on yellow labels is easier to read
- An increased range of NHS forms are available electronically
- Large-print NHS consent forms are available in hard copy
- A test for producing patient appointment letters in large print will be carried out by The Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust
- Emails are being used to arrange appointments with patients when a patient brings particular issues to our attention
- Work is underway with Boots the Chemist as the main provider of community pharmacies in the county, to try and see if it can adapt its prescription medication labels to enable visually impaired people to better understand dosages and instructions
- Triage forms now have a box for recording patients' specific needs so these can be addressed when delivering care
- A poster has been developed to highlight to patients and GPs that information can be made available in a variety of formats
- Makaton kits are now available in Minor Injuries Units (MIU). This is a healthcare book of core Makaton signs and symbols to enhance communication for people with learning difficulties. It is backed up with Makaton signing and one nurse from each MIU has attended a two day signing course
- Leagues of Friends are recruiting more guides to help people get to the right places in hospitals.



Regular checks can prevent blindness

UK experts are predicting a steep rise in the rate of an eye condition which is already a leading cause of blindness. Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) affects more than 600,000 Britons, but an ageing population means this figure could rise by a quarter by 2020, according to recent research in the British Journal of Ophthalmology.



in leafy green vegetables, brightly coloured fruits and vegetables and oily fish may help prevent it. Smoking doubles your chances of developing AMD.

Dr Blakeney said: "I also recommend to patients to regularly check the vision in each eye separately so they can spot early changes. It's easy to do and only takes a couple of seconds, yet it could save your sight. You can do it by looking at a bit of graph paper and checking if you see any distortion or blank spots."

According to a poll by the College of Optometrists, half of UK adults have never heard of AMD and many were unaware a poor diet and smoking increases the risk of developing it.

Age-related macular degeneration affects a tiny part of the retina at the back of the eye controlling central vision, which is lost in the advanced stages of the condition.

"By making people more aware of AMD and the impact that it can have, we hope to increase detection and people seeking access to support services" said Dr Susan Blakeney of the College of Optometrists. She continued, "Age-related macular degeneration is the biggest single cause of sight loss in the UK, so it is concerning so few people are aware of it and its symptoms."

There are two forms of AMD, wet and dry, and currently no cure for either form but early diagnosis and treatment of wet AMD, which develops rapidly, is crucial in order to prevent vision loss. The more common dry AMD develops gradually but there are services available to support people with this condition.

While AMD is a condition associated with older age, there are steps you can take earlier in life to minimise your risk. Research suggests a diet rich



KERNOW POSITIVE SUPPORT
Registered Charity No. 1104947

P. O. Box 85
Bodmin
Cornwall
PL31 1ZN

Office Tel: 01872 262221
Help Line: 01208 264866
KPS TrebullomTel: 01566 86378
Email: office@kpsdirect.com
Website: www.kpsdirect.com

- KPS is a registered charity (1104947) supporting people living with HIV in Cornwall with a variety of frontline support services.
- KPS Trebullom is a newly established national respite, retreat and training centre.



Support for our veterans

More than 120 military veterans in Cornwall have benefitted from higher referral and treatment rates than other areas thanks to a pilot service run by the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Last year the service came runner up in the mental health category of the Military and Civilian Health Partnership Awards, acknowledging the outstanding work to improve the mental health of members of the armed forces and veterans

As one of six pilot sites in England, the service provides assessment, treatment and signposting to improve access to mental health services. The veterans typically experience depression, anxiety, adjustment disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and require therapy and anger management.

The founding nurse, Debra Fenton said, "When we learnt we were going to be one of the national pilot areas, we immediately talked to veterans about the type of support which would best meet their needs. While I'm disappointed not to have scooped first prize at the awards, our success undoubtedly lies in the difference we have made to local veterans and their families. It is hugely

rewarding to work with veterans to help them deal with the trauma of war and adjust back into civilian life."

Arthur was one of the first veterans to use the service. He explains, "It was a life saver and gave me exactly what I needed. I had access to Debra's treatment group once a month plus one-to-one counselling. It came along at just the right moment to help me."

The success of the project can also be attributed to the strong partnerships which have been established with organisations like the Royal British Legion, Combat Stress and local GPs.

Further information is available from the community services section of the trust's website.

T: 01579 335226
www.cornwallfoundationtrust.nhs.uk



Debra Fenton listening to one of the military veterans

Neurology Care Advisors now in post

These new posts are working within the Neuro-Rehabilitation Service as part of the Primary Care Trust and giving support and advice to people living with long term neurological conditions in Cornwall. The service is aimed at people who do not have active case management of their neurological condition and is also available to family and carers. The advisors will work closely with health & social care professionals ensuring continuity of care and support.

The main role of the Neurology Care Advisors will be to provide advice, information, support and signposting. They will act as a single point of contact

and help people to navigate their way through the range of services available within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Mary Eason will cover West Cornwall (west of Newquay & St Austell)
T: 01209 881656

Mel Brobin east of Newquay & St Austell into North Cornwall
T: 01208 256259

The service is available five days a week, 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday with an answer phone for out of hours.



New MS drug hailed a success

An oral drug for treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS) has been approved for some patients in Canada and is now becoming available here. Drug treatment options for MS patients in the UK have usually been limited to medications taken regularly by injection or infusion.

Gilenya, also known as Fingolimod, is a capsule taken once a day for people with the relapsing-remitting form of MS, where patients have relapses that continue to worsen in severity, disability level, or who are unable to tolerate injections.

"It's a long awaited type of medication for our patients," said Dr. Heather MacLean, a neurologist at the Ottawa Hospital who specialises in MS. "Needle injections under the skin are painful and are associated with itching and lumpy skin reactions, and the weekly intramuscular medication can also cause muscle pain," noted

MacLean, who has estimated that 10 to 20% of relapsing-remitting MS patients' currently receiving treatment stand to benefit from Gilenya.

Trials suggested the drug reduced relapses by about half and reduced impairment progression by about a third.

The main side-effect associated with the drug was a drop in heart rate, which means patients taking it will need to be monitored for about six hours the first time they have it. Gilenya also lowers the number of white blood cells and may therefore increase the risk of infections. However, the MS Society have warned of other side-effects including head colds, headaches and fatigue. It also noted that some studies have linked the drug to skin cancer.

Gilenya is a new class of medication thought to act by keeping white blood cells in lymph nodes instead of circulating in the central nervous system, where they could potentially attack myelin, the fatty substance insulating nerves that is damaged in people with MS.

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Disability comments blasted as ignorant

Disability Cornwall was 'alarmed and dismayed' by comments made by a St Austell Town Councillor about equality legislation hampering the development of the town's historic Market House. The organisation, which acts to empower disabled people, says Councillor Wendy Earl's comments about legislation halting immediate plans for the Market House were ignorant.

Mrs Earl claimed plans to bring a tourist information centre and a museum to the town's grade two listed landmark building had been thwarted. The councillor told the *Cornish Guardian*: "Because this legislation seeks to serve about 5% of the population the other 95% are excluded from a service they have indicated they want."

Disability Cornwall said it rejects this assumption and suggests that by taking every possible step to make the physical environment accessible, this might actually benefit not only the 5% of the population who are wheelchair users, but also the people who have mobility impairments, older people of which Cornwall has substantially higher than the national average, and other groups such as parents with pushchairs, who are protected under a separate strand within the Equality Act 2010.

Disability Cornwall chair, Steve Paget MBE said: "St Austell Town Council needs to remember they serve the whole population in their area.

Approximately 20% of Cornwall's population are disabled people and in addition, we have a higher than average population who are retired and may have mobility impairments associated with age. Councillor Earl's comments as a member of the council whose position is to serve the whole community, shows a clear lack of understanding of the barriers faced by the most disadvantaged in society, at a time when due to huge austerity measures they will need more assistance than ever before."

The Equality Act states that public sector organisations must 'have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups'.

Mr Paget added: "It's unclear how Councillor Earl's comments promote any of this ethos, as outlined in the duty."

Guidance from the Equality & Human Rights Commission says the Equality Act 2010 requires service providers to think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people, while considering the range of impairments service users might have and make the necessary adjustments before it becomes an issue.

Original source:
The Cornish Guardian April 2011

Merlin Project bites the bullet in India



Seven thrill seekers with a taste for adventure, took part in the challenge of a life-time in India for Cornwall's MS Therapy Centre often known as the Merlin Project.

The adventurers covered over 1,300 km on the backs of motorbikes and not just any motorbike either, but Royal Enfield Bullets, ridden along some of the most challenging terrain in India – through the stunning scenery of the Himalaya region, to soaking up the culture of Dharamsala. India, a country unlike any other.

Arranged in conjunction with Adventure Global Challenges over £9,000 was raised, but as well as raising money, strong and lasting friendships were developed as well as a definite thirst to seek out other challenges in the future.

Although a tough challenge for anyone, the oldest challenger, Frank Oak, is 72 years old and kept everyone at home up to date with daily blog entries. Here is an extract account of the amazing journey.

I have always enjoyed a challenge and even two heart attacks have not stopped me from trekking in Peru and Japan. Usually just me and a backpack so this was the first time it had involved a beautiful piece of machinery that is the Royal Enfield Bullet!

We took in the sights and sounds of Delhi before boarding the Shatabdi Express, a superfast train, which took just over six hours to cover 280 miles to Amritsar. This is a lively and vivid city, with the famous Golden Temple, where literally thousands of people visit on a daily basis. After this came the chance to try out the Enfield's. We had plenty of practise time, but I don't think any of us were

particularly prepared for the hustle and bustle and sheer terror of Amritsar's traffic!

Day four and the real challenge began, although thoroughly briefed, none of us were wholly ready for the diversity of the road conditions, ranging from farm tracks to smooth tarmac. The hardest thing to get our heads around was the, 'anything goes' attitude of many drivers, there appeared to be no hard and fast rules for correct lanes, even on the dual carriage-ways tractors were heading straight for us!

A treat for our tired bodies and minds was a stay in a beautiful hotel near the home of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. The hotel was at the top of a mountain with the most beautiful views over the city. The purpose of us being there was really brought home to me that evening when a lady in the hotel asked what we were doing. I explained about the work of the Merlin Project, and more people gathered to listen to us, people who were for all purposes strangers, but we received over £50 in donations from them.

The day we rode from Manali to Chail was the toughest we all faced with some of the steepest climbs as well as the longest days travelling. The effort was more than worth it taking us to the very top of the Jalori Pass, a 10,000ft ascend. The road up was no more than a dirt track which amazingly doubled up as a regular route for buses. On the way up my back wheel got caught in a giant pothole and luckily our guide saw I was stuck as the others had long gone, not realising I needed help. Afterwards, not to look like the 72 year old I am, I put my foot down, adrenalin pumping, and overtook some of the guys just to prove I still have what it takes!



We rode along the banks of the River Ganges back to the camp in Delhi to complete our trip, which gave us the chance to concentrate on the breath-taking sights rather than the ground conditions beneath us. Our last night was filled with celebrations of what we had all achieved as a group, the dream team of thrill seekers we had become!

India was a totally wild, hair raising and exhilarating experience. I loved every single moment of it and although it was raising money for a cause close to my heart, it was a completely selfish act because of the most amazing time I got to have. Not only would I do it all again, I am going to do it again.

By Ellie May



All are welcome to use the Centre if they feel they will benefit from any of the following treatments:-

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- Osteopathy
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- Facial Reflexology
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- Counselling
- Yoga
- Pilates

The Cornwall Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre exists to deliver a wide range of treatments and therapies along with the support and fellowship to those who are living with Multiple Sclerosis, their families and their carers'.

The new Centre opened its doors in April '09 and gives clients access to otherwise illusive, life enhancing orthodox and complimentary therapies.

Although principally for those with M.S., many other conditions are treated, including, Arthritis, M.E., Sports Injuries, Fractures, Tinnitus and much more.



For more information on how the Centre can help you, contact us on:-

Bradbury House
Hewas Water
St Austell
Cornwall
PL26 7JF

Telephone:
01726 885530

Email:
merlinproject.org.uk

Website:
www.merlinproject.org.uk

charity number:
1093691

The Cornwall Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre



Hate Crime record it don't ignore it



Regular readers of DISCOVER will know we have been profiling the issue of Hate Crime in relation to disabled people. We asked for readers' feedback as we want to gather evidence from Cornwall residents on what is happening here and now in our great and beautiful, but still in some cases, sadly somewhat 'behind the times' county.

And what feedback did we get? Zilch, nada, zero. That's great we thought, this must be an indication Cornwall is one of the best counties in the country, with low crime rates and great quality of life. No? After all, Devon and Cornwall police figures show only 16 recorded hate crimes against disabled people took place in the last three years.

But nationally, statistics tell a different story: The Disability Rights Commission's Attitudes and Awareness Survey (2003) revealed 22% of disabled respondents had experienced harassment in public because of their impairment. Incidents of harassment were more acute among 15-34 year olds with 33% of this group of disabled people experiencing harassment.

8% of disabled people in London suffered a violent attack during 2001-02 compared with 4% of non-disabled people. Research by Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) found that, 'The attacks have resulted in around a third avoiding specific places and changing their usual routine. One in four has moved home. Many disabled people are not confident the police can help to stop the incidents'.

Research by Mencap demonstrated that 90% of people with a learning difficulty had experienced bullying and harassment. 66% of people with a learning disability have been

bullied regularly with almost half of those stating that bullying was taking place on a daily or weekly basis (Living in Fear, 2000).

Ok, the statistics are old, and with disabled people less willing than ever to put up with abuses of their rights and dignity, things may have improved, even in London! So how is it that we here at Disability Cornwall continue to hear stories from disabled people about their experiences of abuse and harassment in Cornwall? Is it a misunderstanding of the term hate crime? Is it an unwillingness to engage with the police or other official recording channels? Is it a fear of the consequences within often small and interlinked communities?

Don't get us wrong – we don't want Hate Crime to raise its ugly head here or anywhere else; it's just we know the reality is different than local statistics would suggest, and without real hard evidence of it happening in our own 'backyard', there's little hope of getting the will and resources in place to make a positive difference.

We think a lot has to do with awareness, which is why we put in an application to the Ministry of Justice to deliver a campaign to raise awareness of disability hate crime. We want to foster a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment and abuse, verbal or physical that undermine the dignity and rights of disabled people to live as full and active citizens in their communities. Whatever the outcome of that application, we will continue our work to try and make Cornwall a better place to live for everyone.

Please share your experiences with us so we can make a positive change. Get in touch via DIAL.

T: 01736 759500

E: dial@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

Birmingham City Council care limits ruled as unlawful

The families of four severely disabled people have taken a test case against their city council to the High Court. It's the first in a series of possible legal challenges to councils around the UK mounted by the people facing cuts to social care.

Birmingham City Council is planning to reduce care packages to only people assessed as having 'critical needs', and says it needs to make the cuts to help slash £118m from its adult and communities directorate. But the judges ruled the council's business plan was unlawful because it

failed to comply with Section 49a of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The four people, who cannot be named for legal reasons, include a 65-year-old woman with severe learning difficulties who receives 24hr care. Her sister-in-law said, "She relies on the council's support to assist her with daily living skills and to support and promote her independence, the care is hugely beneficial and without it, her quality of life would fall dramatically."

A spokesman for the council said they would be looking at the judgement in detail before making a decision on whether to lodge an appeal. He also said, "It's important to point out this judgement is about the process we went through with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act, not the actual decision about where savings should be made."

Tony Rabaiotti, head of local government in the West Midlands for public sector union Unison, welcomed the ruling and said: "This is a tremendous victory for thousands of vulnerable people. Social workers across Birmingham have been telling Unison over the last few months they are genuinely frightened by the proposal to so severely axe social care provision."

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In each issue of **DISCOVER** we invite organisations to tell us about their services



Connect

Connect is a national charity working with people with Aphasia, a communication impairment usually caused by head injury or stroke, the leading cause of disability in the UK. In Cornwall, we support people living with Aphasia to re-connect with life by delivering services led by people who have the condition.

This year, 130,000 people in the UK will have a stroke. One third of those who survive will have aphasia and there are currently about 250,000 people with the condition in the UK alone. Connect offers free services including:

Befriending. Connect provides training and supervision for volunteers with aphasia who offer one-to-one support to others with stroke and aphasia in hospital and at home. These visits encourage and help other people with aphasia to re-connect with life.

Conversation Groups. Led by trained volunteers with aphasia and supported by volunteers. People trade skills and resources, make friends, support each other and encourage socialising. Above all, the groups offer confidence and the reassurance that others in the group understand their aphasia.

Hubs. A unique way for people with aphasia to influence and shape services and to raise awareness of the condition.

Training in Communication Skills to health professionals and others.

Connect works in partnership with other health and social care providers and voluntary organisations.

T: 01209 716501

E: stevenicholls@ukconnect.org



Freedom OCD

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or OCD is an anxiety disorder characterised by intrusive thoughts that provoke uneasiness, apprehension, fear or worry.

Symptoms can include repetitive hand washing, aversions to particular items, words or numbers and nervous habits, such as opening and closing doors a certain number of times, not treading on cracks in the pavement, having things arranged in a particular order or even aggressive impulses.

It's the fourth most common mental disorder and diagnosed nearly as often as asthma. The symptoms can be time consuming and alienating and often cause severe emotional and financial distress. People with OCD find it difficult to hold down a job, or conduct relationships and many have had to curtail their education.

Freedom OCD is a self-help group for people with obsessive compulsive disorder based in Truro. It's not a therapy group, but aims to help members through peer support in a safe non-threatening environment. The group meets on the last Thursday of the month in the Age Concern building from 10.30am–12.30pm, although people are welcome to meet informally from 10am–1pm.

New activities have been organised as well as speakers on topics chosen by group members. The emphasis is very much on the members to decide how they want the group to develop and what they want to take away from it.

New members are always welcome and can bring a supportive friend or relative with them. The meetings give people a chance to talk about their experiences, learn through other members, make new friends, learn a new skill or just relax in a friendly environment.

T: 01872 243542

E: nicky.cope@cornwallrcc.org.uk

Shared Lives South West (SWAPS)

SWAPS match people who have care and support needs with experienced families that have been recruited and trained and subsequently approved by their independent panel.

People may be matched for a long term arrangement where they move in and become a member of the household, or for a short break or possibly for some support during the day. The care and support offered is person centred and individualised.

Shared Lives carers' support people who have a learning difficulty, mental health issue, physical disability, sensory loss, dementia or any other issue that means the individual could benefit from some extra support. Some families work with more than one person at a time.

The services offered are flexible where the person may live near the carer, perhaps in an annexe, and receive assistance to enable them to live more independently, to someone who may just require occasional support.

The staff team monitor and support the arrangement, making sure the carers are working in a person centred way and are able to meet the needs of the person living or staying with them.

Shared Lives is registered with the Care Quality Commission and achieved 'Excellent' when they were last assessed.

T: 01209 891888
www.swaps.org.uk

British Red Cross Care in the Home services

The British Red Cross loans medical equipment and provides short-term care and support in the home for people after an accident or illness, giving them the confidence to continue their daily lives.



Last year the Red Cross in Cornwall received 1,500 referrals of this kind and Audrey and Norman Reading, who live near Camborne, were among them.

Retired secretary Audrey, 77, has rheumatoid arthritis while retired salesman Norman, 81, is registered blind. The couple remain active and independent but when Audrey was rushed into hospital with a dislocated hip last year, Norman called the Red Cross for help.

He says: "Red Cross volunteers are the salt of the earth. You need a lot of patience when you're dealing with people who are unwell and their help made our lives much easier."

Volunteers Larry and Kath Glasson helped Norman find a system for identifying food in his freezer and preparing his own meals so he could remain independent. Over the next 18 months, whenever the couple needed help, Red Cross volunteers did their shopping and helped them attend hospital and GP appointments.

Norman says: "The Red Cross is a very versatile organisation. When you're stuck you can always get in touch with them and if they can't do something themselves they refer you to someone else who can."

The service is free and available on a short-term basis. Referrals come from health care providers and social workers but people can also self-refer. Medical equipment, like wheelchairs and commodes, is also available on loan in exchange for a donation. To get in touch or enquire about volunteering please call Celia Newcombe.

T: 01872 272878.
www.redcross.org.uk/careinthehome

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DIAL - your questions answered

Q. I attend a local disability support group and we've been talking about the benefit changes and no-one is sure what's right. Everyone is fairly confused and wonder if someone could speak to our group?

A. Part of the service DIAL can offer is attending local groups for informal talks. We can give information regarding benefits and how to claim them as well as personal budgets and the relevant employer issues. Once we have delivered a talk to your group, there will be an opportunity for an appointment to be made with one of the DIAL team on a one to one, confidential basis.

Q. Over the last six months my mobility has deteriorated. I'm now a full time wheelchair user living in a first floor housing association flat. To find a suitable property I need to use the Home Choice Scheme, but I'm 78, don't have a computer, and don't always receive the weekly housing information regarding available properties the council send. I'm stuck in my flat and can't afford to rent privately. Can you help me to move?

A. This issue has been raised several times and Disability Cornwall is now negotiating with Cornwall Council to ensure disabled people have better access to the Home Choice Scheme. To help you bid on suitable properties, Home Choice should appoint a support worker to assist you, and in some exceptional cases, it is possible to bypass the scheme altogether. The Fire Service can do a risk assessment to support an application for a suitable property and DIAL can assist you with this process or help you find a suitable advocate.

Q. Is Human Rights legislation relevant in the UK and how does it actually afford me protection as a disabled person?

A. The Human Rights Act became effective in the UK in October 2000 and has the potential to empower disabled people.

It's important disabled people can access information about their human rights and challenge any discriminatory treatment. People often think human rights are a complex legal topic and only significant overseas. A person may not realise they are able to do something about their situation, or even know there is something wrong with the way they are being treated. It's not always necessary to take a case to court. A human rights issue can be resolved by negotiating an outcome without court proceedings. However, The Human Rights Act provides an important tool for disabled people to use to challenge discrimination and unacceptable treatment, and provides protection regarding being treated with fairness, equality, dignity and respect.

The British Institute of Human Rights produces an information book which explains in easy terminology, using both examples and case studies, what human rights are and how they assist and protect you as a disabled person. If you would like a copy please contact DIAL.

01736 759500

Disability Information & Advice Line

Our DIAL service is staffed by fully qualified advisers who offer independent and impartial information, advice and support on any disability related enquiry.

DIAL is free and available to disabled people, their families, carers and professionals. We can assist with welfare rights, benefits entitlement, direct payments and personal budgets, independent living, community care, leisure, education and training enquiries.

T: 01736 759500
10am-3pm Mon – Fri

E: dial@disabilitycornwall.org.uk



One man can make a difference

One man played a pivotal role in the tumultuous events that have been sweeping across the Middle East. This one man became the spark that lit the flame of protest, resulting in the fall of Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali and his 24-year regime. The flame became a fire, inspiring the protests in Egypt and subsequent fall of President Mubarak after 30 years, and gathering pace, started to burn across the whole region. One man.

Sadly Muhammad Al Bouazizi did not live to see the historic outcome of the events he began. This 26-year old Tunisian had been unable to find a job after finishing college but refused to join the 'army of unemployed youth,' as it has become

known in Tunisia. His attempt to overcome his poverty by selling vegetables was halted by a police officer who seized his goods, claiming that Al Bouazizi was working without the necessary legal permit. Some observers allege the police officer slapped him across his face, others that Al Bouazizi tried to complain but no one listened to him. Whatever his intentions, Muhammad Al Bouazizi's actions changed Tunisian history and maybe that of the entire Middle East region.

On 17 December last year, Al Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of a government building, remaining in hospital for 18 days while fighting severe burns over his entire body. At one point he was even visited in hospital by the President. He was a symbol for all the young college graduates who were unemployed and became a catalyst for the violent demonstrations which followed. Young and unemployed Tunisians took to the streets to protest against living conditions and the economy.

Al Bouazizi died of his injuries on 4 January this year. Ten days later the President fled with his family to Saudi Arabia. The rest, as they say, is history.



Paul Hunt

On 20 September 1972, Paul Hunt, a wheelchair user living in a Leonard Cheshire home, wrote the following letter to the Guardian newspaper.

Sir, Ann Shearer's account of the CMH conference of, and not on, the so-called mentally handicapped, challenges our patronising assumptions about such people. It also has important implications for anyone who genuinely wants to help other disadvantaged groups. For instance, practically every sentence in her article could apply with equal force to the severely physically handicapped, many of whom also find themselves in isolated and unsuitable institutions, where their views are ignored and they are subject to authoritarian and often cruel regimes.

I am proposing the formation of a consumer group to put forward nationally the views of actual and potential residents of these successors to the workhouse. We hope in particular to formulate and publicise plans for alternative kinds of care. I should be glad to hear from anyone who is interested to join or support this project.

Yours faithfully,
Paul Hunt

This letter is extremely important for many reasons. It represents the start of the disability rights movement in the UK. As a result of this letter, two other people – Paul Abberley and Vic Finklestein – got in touch with Paul Hunt, and together they formed an organisation called the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). This organisation wrote a document called 'The Fundamental Principles of Disability'. The document represents the start of what became known as the Social Model of Disability. For the first time ever disabled people identified the notion of disability. They separated it from the notion of impairment and stated that a person may have an impairment, **but they are in fact disabled by society and the barriers it presents.**

Fast forward to 2011 and Disability Cornwall is working with our Local Authority to help with the government's Personalisation Agenda. This adopts the social model of disability, to put the disabled person in charge of his or her life and to buy in the services he or she needs. In other words, the social model is now mainstream, well at least on paper.

All of this progress – from institutions to independent living - came from this one letter to the Guardian nearly 40 years ago. Groups of disabled people got together across the country and there are now over 400 such organisations. Together they created a political voice. Together they created arts festivals, campaigned to change things locally, were interviewed on TV, radio and in the press. This was the beginning of the voice of disabled people in the UK.

So if you're thinking you can't make a difference, remember Muhammad Al Bouazizi and Paul Hunt. Yes, you can.



Let's ask the MPs

What do you have to say to disabled people who feel personally targeted by cuts to public services, cuts to benefit entitlement, and cuts to the vital support provided by charities and representative organisations that assist with independent living?

Labour



Ben Bradshaw MP
Exeter

I am appalled by the way this government is targeting the disabled and some of the most vulnerable in our society. They promised they would protect the vulnerable from the impact of their reckless cuts. In fact, they are bearing the brunt, while the bankers, who caused the global financial crisis in the first place, are getting off scot free – still raking in their bonuses. Labour is fighting hard to oppose the most damaging and unfair of these cuts.

T: 01392 424464

E: bradshawb@parliament.uk



Alison Seabeck MP
Plymouth Moor View

I know that many of my constituents, who have a disability, have benefitted immeasurably from the tireless and dedicated efforts of charities and volunteers. For many people cutting funding for these services will mean cutting their lifelines too."

T: 01752 365617

E: alison.seabeck.mp@parliament.uk

Conservative



George Eustice MP
Camborne & Redruth

Firstly, this is an issue I take a very keen interest in as I am chairman of the Conservative Disability Group, and will be hosting several round-table discussions between MPs and national disabled charity representatives in the coming months. Secondly, the government are not cutting disability benefits, and are definitely not 'personally targeting' disabled people.

13 years of Labour's financial mismanagement left this country paying more in debt interest per year than we do on the NHS and Defence budgets combined. The new government have taken the urgent and necessary action to start changing this state of affairs, and all reforms have been undertaken with fairness as a guiding principle. It is always crucial that money reaches those with greatest need, and I believe the reassessment of the benefits system will achieve this."

T: 01209 713355

E: george.eustice.mp@parliament.uk



Sheryl Murray MP
South East Cornwall

I would like to assure you that disabled people are not being targeted by cuts. It's true however, we can no longer live off borrowing as the last government did, spending money it did not have and leaving a legacy where we pay £120m a day in interest alone.

The Welfare Reform Bill introduces a wide range of reforms that will make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler. It has a goal to get more people into work, but to also protect the most vulnerable and deliver fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer.

There will be reforms to Disability Living Allowance, through the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment to meet the needs of disabled people today. We will also be reforming Employment Support Allowance to make the benefit fairer and to ensure that help goes to those with the greatest need.

When it comes to local services, local councils are often best placed to decide on what services are best for their area and should control these decisions. That is why the government is giving more power to councils to make these choices.

T: 01579 344428

E: Sheryll@sheryllmurray.com



Sarah Newton MP
Truro & Falmouth

The answer to your question is 'very concerned'. Each week I meet a number of constituents with disabilities as well as their families and carers and as a result I am well aware of the issues you have raised. There is the most dreadful scaremongering and misrepresentation of the facts about the proposals within the Welfare Reform Bill and I would appreciate you letting all your members, who are also my constituents, have my contact details and let them know I will be happy to meet or correspond with them to address their individual concerns. I often meet people in their homes if that is more convenient.

T: 01872 274760

E: sarah.newton.mp@parliament.uk

Liberal Democrat



Andrew George MP
St Ives

The coalition has rightly trumpeted 'those with the broadest shoulders should bear the greatest burden and the vulnerable will be protected'. I'm seeking to make sure the government lives up to its word. Some of the welfare reforms do not when you compare them to the continuation of bankers bonuses.

Following pressure, the government's plans to remove the mobility component of DLA from those living in funded care homes has been removed from the Welfare Reform Bill, until a thorough review has been conducted. In addition, Local Housing Allowance rules are changing to allow people needing 24hr care to obtain extra money.

However, the decision not to increase funding of DLA will create pressure on that budget and needs to be watched and resisted. On the other hand, the government is implementing 12 of the 14 recommendations of the Harrington review, including giving more discretion to Jobcentres over Employment Support Allowance (such as examining other evidence e.g. from a GP) possibly beneficial to people living with fluctuating conditions. In addition, changes to the Access to Work scheme are intended to extend government support for necessary adjustments for disabled people in the workplace.

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Stephen Gilbert MP
St Austell & Newquay

I hope that everyone will agree with the coalition government's aim of a fairer benefit system which is easier to use and focuses our limited resources to provide help for the people who need it most. I do understand people's concerns and I'd like to assure you I will put all the pressure I can on the government to ensure no deserving person is penalised by these changes."

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E: Stephen.gilbert.mp@parliament.uk



Dan Rogerson MP
North Cornwall

While cuts are being made to public services due to the disastrous economic legacy left to us by Labour, I do not agree they are targeted specifically at disabled people. The coalition government is actually, in many areas, improving public services for disabled people. During the spending review, an additional £2bn was secured for social care by 2014/15 and £400m made available for a weeks' respite care for carers who work more than 50hrs per week. As part of the Local Housing Benefit, people in need of overnight carers will be able to claim an additional room for their carer estimated to benefit 10,000 disabled people. We have also announced additional funding to charities who provide health related services but who may be struggling from the local government cuts.

We are providing a solution to the question of long term funding of social care and ending the scandal under the last Labour government where thousands of people were forced to sell their homes to finance their social care. The government has commissioned Lord Harrington to look at the tick boxes the Work Capability Assessment use, to ensure they better cater for disabled people with hidden or fluctuating circumstances.

The government is aiming to reform access to work procedures, allowing disabled people to apply for jobs with confirmation their potential employer will receive funding ensuring work is accessible, so disabled people are not discriminated against by potential employers.

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Fiesta or Siesta

Your choice in Caleta



By Nathan Doidge

Fuerteventura is one of the Canary Islands, all of which belong to Spain and are just off the coast of Morocco. This usually means one of the best things about holidaying there is you can almost guarantee good weather throughout your stay, although with the unusually cold weather we have seen in Britain this winter also affecting the Canaries, but to a lesser extent, their typically minimal average rainfall has been significantly higher.

Caleta de Fuste, the resort I have stayed in during my visits over the past nine years is, handily, on the east coast of Fuerteventura, just a 10-minute taxi-ride from the airport, costing around €10. It's a small resort, built especially for tourists and has a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. In more usual economic times, Caleta de Fuste would have probably grown much larger, but with the recession being felt in Fuerteventura to the extent that over 10,000 residents left the island last year, this hasn't happened.

This is one of the things I like about Caleta though. In its current phase, you get the best

of both worlds; if you want a relaxing holiday sitting in the sun, perhaps having quiet drinks at one of the bars/cafes, and having the option of spending your evenings watching the acts who make up the local entertainment circuit, then Caleta is for you. If however, a holiday of partying is more your style, you can do that too. Although there are no actual nightclubs, there are several bars which stay open until 3 or 4am, a few of which have dance floors, etc. Accessibility varies greatly from bar to bar and I don't know of any with an accessible toilet. However, the staff are usually only too willing to help and, if you are desperate, there is always the nearby Barcelo five-star hotel, which has an excellent accessible toilet. They also have their own, quite professional, nightly entertainment which they don't seem to mind non-residents watching. Their waiter service also makes life easy, especially if you're working your way through their extensive cocktail menu!

Late-opening bar-wise, the Fado Rock Cafe is probably the most accessible, with level entry and access to the bar, dance floor and toilets. My usual haunt though, is Piero's. After their entertainment



of path hasn't been built yet. Eventually, the two existing sections of path will, no doubt, be joined up and hotels and/or shops will be built there but for now, it's a nice section to walk along. It's quite sandy and rocky but I have a particularly small scooter with little ground clearance and, with a little care and attention, I can cross it quite easily. However, those who aren't risk getting stuck can follow the main road, which runs parallel from the top of Caleta, on the other side of which is Lomas and 'Chipmunk Hill', so called because of the countless chipmunks which inhabited it before it was built on. This is the location of the Sunday morning market and Tommy Nutters pool bar, where service really does come with a smile and everyone I've spoken to who's been there agrees with me, they do the best food in the area and at reasonable prices.

has finished at around 11.30pm, they see how many people get up to dance and then either have karaoke as billed or a disco. Their access is down a flight of steps one side or a ramp the other, although it is quite steep and most manual wheelchair users would need help getting back up it. This is typical of Canarian ramps, although this thankfully, seems to be changing.

Of course, while you may be happy staying in Caleta, there's a whole island you can explore, either by renting a car or, as my Mum and I did once, doing something different and seeing the island from the back of a trike, or even driving it yourself, in convoy with a few other trikes on tour!

General access around Caleta is very good, emphasised by the relatively high number of wheelchair and scooter users you see there. The still quite high drop-curbs of yesteryear have now been lowered, pavements are relatively smooth and the main pedestrian area in the centre of Caleta is tiled.

The friendliness and helpfulness I've come to know in Fuerteventura extends into the airport. As someone with disabilities, I have always found the assistance they offer really quite impressive. Confident in the knowledge I know plenty of people in Caleta who would help me if need be, I once went out there on my own. When the plane arrived, one of the airport staff specifically employed to assist disabled travellers brought my scooter to the door of the aircraft and fast-tracked me through passport control to baggage reclaim as usual. Then, as I was travelling alone, she stayed with me until my scooter and I were safely in a taxi with the driver clear about where I wanted to go.

There is also a level path along the coastline with access at several points on to the beach, some of which are ramped and lead to the recently installed wooden walkways which stretch down to the sun-loungers near the shoreline. Also recently installed on the beach are some toilets which have massive wheelchair symbols painted on the outside but, as the walkways don't actually reach them, their accessibility is laughable at best.

The level of assistance offered when leaving Fuerteventura is good, too. Just like at British airports, disabled travellers usually board the

For those who like to explore further, continuing on the coast path brings you to the Atlantico shopping centre. Here, the shops are much less tourist orientated and sell good quality clothes, jewellery, etc. The centre also encompasses a cinema and a supermarket where prices are geared towards the locals and are hence much lower than in Caleta itself.

On the way there, before reaching a bar which isn't so much by the sea as surrounded by it, accessed only by crossing a bridge (or swimming!) there is an area of wasteland where that section



aircraft first but the difference comes at check-in when, as soon as I've arrived, another check-in desk has been opened especially, with a low-level, flip-up surface on the side. Once checked-in, I've been fast-tracked once again through to departures and told where everything is (shops, food and drink outlets, accessible toilets) and the meeting point to go to just prior to boarding time.

For me, this helpfulness, the general accessibility, a relaxed atmosphere but with the option to party, and the (usually) good weather, make Caleta de Fuste an ideal holiday destination.



SIA pleads with soap to change suicide storyline

The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) has been trying to persuade the producers of the soap opera Emmerdale not to run their sensational storyline about a tetraplegic, played by Jackson Walsh, 22. The SIA believe it's a negative portrayal of spinal cord injury, but Emmerdale's producers are proposing to go ahead with their storyline for the character committing an assisted suicide.

The story concerns character Marc Silcock, struggling to cope since becoming paralysed in a dramatic train accident last year. Now it has been revealed that Jackson will ask mum, Hazel, and boyfriend Aaron, to assist him to end his life.

Alistair Thompson, of the Care Not Killing Alliance, told The Sun: "I hope this is done for the right reason and not to chase ratings. The right reason is to make people more aware of tetraplegia rather than using sensationalism to get good ratings."

The SIA have complained the storyline shows a negative portrayal of spinal cord injury, focusing on Jackson Walsh's limitations rather than rightful expectations, and that a sensational story line appears to have triumphed over the need to be sensitive to those who are newly injured, and who may see this plot as their only future.

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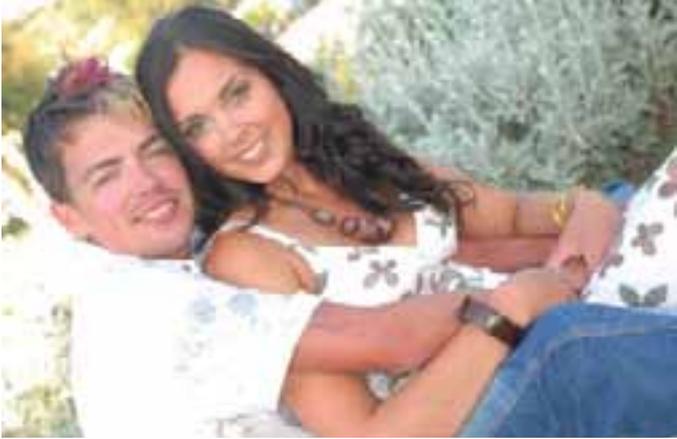
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Email lizconroy@conroys.gb.com
www.conroys.gb.com

A design for dignity



Daniel and his girlfriend Kayleigh

This year Daniel Male registered his new company 'The Joey Pouch', and sales are already rolling in. The medical pouch is designed to provide more dignity for people by making medical pumps and other devices which are connected to the body, more discreet. Daniel told DISCOVER his own story and what led him to his novel invention

Nine years ago, when I was just 20, I was diagnosed with Primary Pulmonary Hypertension (PPH). This condition, more commonly known as heart and lung disease, means the alveoli in my lungs are not effective at transferring oxygen to my blood system.

In the year prior to diagnosis I had struggled with my life. I was undertaking a carpentry apprenticeship and working on a building site five days a week. My weight plummeted from 12 stone to 7 and I became very weak. Other symptoms included constant vomiting and severe pain, all I could keep down was a biscuit and work colleagues believed I had an eating disorder. The pain coupled with failure from medical professionals to diagnose my illness caused me to become depressed.

My eventual diagnosis was accidental. During a hospital visit for a C.T scan on my stomach, it was noticed my heart was unbelievably large - five times larger the norm! Further tests confirmed my illness as the exceptionally

rare condition of PPH, affecting only two in every million of the population. Few effective treatments exist and as yet there is no cure. I was told to go home and enjoy Christmas with my family as it would be my last. Some Christmas present that was!

Despite being given only a year to live, I was determined not to let the illness defeat me, even at the point at which my only hope was to receive a heart and lung transplant. This was absolutely going to be the last resort. I was scared of dying and knew only too well that most patients undergoing this operation did not survive very long. Instead of the transplant I opted for a novel treatment which involved a three day administration of drugs directly into my stomach through a needle attached to a pump. The pain was excruciating as the drug caused burning of my skin and subsequent abscess formation.

I maintained this treatment regime for five years and often wondered about the quality of my life. An average day consisted of sitting on the sofa or lying in bed watching daytime television. I survived the pain and escaped the boredom by frequently overdosing on strong pain killers.

Eventually I was offered some pioneering treatment with the opportunity of having drugs delivered directly through my chest and into my heart through a Hickman line, an intravenous catheter. Although scared at the thought of undergoing this procedure, I was convinced the pain and discomfort could not possibly be worse than what I had already experienced.

I went ahead with the procedure and amazingly, almost 10 years after diagnosis, I'm still here! Two years ago I met Kayleigh and we are now engaged and looking forward to getting married in Cyprus next year. Kayleigh has helped me rebuild my confidence and self-esteem which the illness destroyed over the years. It's amazing how much better you feel when you are happy and have things in your life to look forward to!

As soon as my health started to improve I wanted to get back to work. I was tired of being on benefits and having no money to enjoy myself. My disease left me with limitations in performing a 'normal' job and I didn't want to let people down by having days where I simply was unable



to work. Kayleigh suggested starting my own business, a job where I could manage my time and commitment seemed the perfect solution.

With support from Action for Employment, Mentor's Den, Leonard Cheshire Disability, and more recently the NHS Innovation Hub, Outset Cornwall and Oxford Innovation, I have been able to progress my business idea – the design, manufacture and sale of medical pouches. The Joey Pouch stemmed from an idea I had some years ago to provide more dignity for patients by making medical pumps and other devices connected to the body more discreet. I know how it feels to be stared at for having something different attached to your body, which is the last thing you need when you are already feeling low. Joey Pouches are user led in their design so patients love them. They are designed to hold various pumps used in the treatment of illnesses, such as PPH, cancer, diabetes, and catheter or colostomy bags, and to complement clothing, enabling one to feel more confident and comfortable.

I have had a great deal of interest in my business, appearing in the press and so on. This excitement has been challenged by a deterioration in my health. I'm currently awaiting a transplant but hope that I will not be out of action for too long. I'm determined to make this business work and help and inspire others who find themselves in a similar situation to me.

I donate 10% of my profits to charities representing the interests of people like me. If you, or someone you know could benefit from a Joey Pouch, please have a look at the product range.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

Daniel Male

Joey Pouch

www.joeypouch.co.uk



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Warehouse launch event

Disability Cornwall's new offices in Hayle, were formally opened in December marked by a two day launch event, with the official opening ceremony performed by Laurence Reed from BBC Radio Cornwall.

Organisations and local business were invited to find out about how their business needs could be met through professional services such as payroll, access solutions, training & consultancy. Perhaps most significant, was the opportunity to view the new conference venue, The Warehouse, now open and available for hire.

The following day, members of the community were invited to pop in and meet the team and find out how the organisation is making a positive difference to the lives of disabled people,

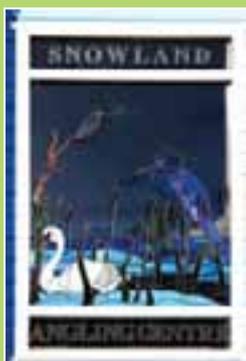


their families and carers in Cornwall.

Scheduled to coincide with the International Day for Disabled People, what wasn't meant to clash, was Cornwall's experience of the now infamous big freeze and the subsequent snowfall! Everyone involved was delighted so many people were still able to visit despite the difficult driving conditions.

The event showcased photography by Disability Cornwall's photographer, Geoff Squibb LRPS and his empowering images of disabled people, in addition to a fantastic collection of oil paintings by the Carers Colour Group.

Snowland Angling & Riding Centre



Recently included as one of the UK's top ten venues for good wheelchair access by The Angler's Mail, the centre is located at Par, near the entrance to the rear of Par Station Goods Yard.

The lakes and riding stables are suitable for all members of the public regardless of physical ability. A number of the fishing platforms have safety rails fitted and all have parking within 10 metres. Our stables have mounting blocks and other accessible facilities for riders.

The lakes contain a mixture of fish including Carp, Roach, Bream and Perch. We also have a professional coach on site should that be required.

We have ample parking, seating around part of the lake, level access, a cafe and accessible toilets.

Further information can be obtained from Trevor

T: 07598 392278

www.gethooked.co.uk/fisheries/snowland_angling_centre



ROWLANDS FAIR

West Cornwall Lions Clubs, in association with Dave Rowland Funfairs, are holding a funfair for people with additional needs at the Circus Field off the A392, near Morrison's Roundabout at Newquay on Sunday 12 June, 10.30am-1pm.

For further details please telephone Ken Powell.

T: 01872 552638

E: kennethpowell@mypostoffice.co.uk

Woss on?



The fourth Joe Way Paddle for Life is riding a wave towards Newquay on the 15 September.

Joe is the inspirational little boy who touched people's lives around the country and beyond when he fought against all the odds. Sadly Joe died aged 4 from his complex illnesses, but his cheeky smile has helped to raise over £93,000 for the building of Cornwall's first children's hospice, better known as The Precious Lives Appeal.

Ben Skinner who is an Ambassador for Joe's story said, "Joe's paddle is a great Cornish event which brings people of all ages and abilities together in the water, while raising money for charity and all of us at SKINDOG surfboards are proud to support it."

The event is run at zero cost as all the equipment, food and raffle prizes are donated, so 100% of all the money goes to one of the 20 charities Joe's story now supports.

The entry fee this year is £10 per adult and £5 per child (under 16's) however, you can also download a sponsor form and raise as much as you want for your chosen charity.

Matt Way, Joe's Dad said, "Claire and I cannot thank the businesses and people enough who now support this celebration of our late son's life. Joe has always and will continue to inspire new people who then grab a board and paddle for charity."

To take part in the Joe Way Newquay Paddle for Life 2011, see what happened at last years event and get up to date news visit

www.joewaypaddle.co.uk



At Volunteer Cornwall we believe volunteering is for everyone!

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...not your disabilities

to help find you a volunteering placement that suits you.



Contact us on
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www.volunteercornwall.org.uk

Changing Lives Through Volunteering.

Get engaged! Join us for lunch and presentations

We want to make sure wheelchair services continue to improve and would like to meet with wheelchair users to find out how you wish to engage in services in the future.

12 — 3pm

Wednesday	15 June	MS Therapy Centre	St Austell
Thursday	16 June	The Echo Centre	Liskeard
Friday	17 June	Disability Cornwall	Hayle



This event is free and the places are limited, so please make contact and book your place as soon as possible.

T: 01736 756655 E: info@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

BLUE LIGHT DAY

'Putting your safety first'



On Wednesday

15
June

At



Feel free to drop in any time between:



10.30am and



2.30pm

Come along for a chance to meet your local Police,
 Fire and Ambulance Services



There will be lots to see, and lots to do!

Drinks will be provided



miRacle tHeAtRE CoMpany

Miracle Theatre Open-Air Tour June-August 2011

Miracle Theatre Company is one of Cornwall's most distinctive voices. Known for their daring, innovative and downright funny physical performances they have been entertaining audiences across the South West for over 30 years. This summer's show *The Death of Sherlock Holmes* is being performed in stunning outdoor locations across Cornwall including Trelassick Gardens and Restormel Castle which are accessible for wheelchair users. Test your powers of observation and deduction alongside the world's greatest detective, as Miracle Theatre stirs up all the ingredients of the best Sherlock Holmes mystery with a large measure of comedy to bring audiences of all ages a period thriller with a sting in its tail!

Please contact Miracle Theatre before booking tickets to discuss any any access requirements you may have.

T: 01209 216762

www.miracletheatre.co.uk

I enjoy simple recipes from whatever ingredients are lurking in the fridge, store cupboard or garden, and the two recipes below are exactly that. The Chicken Tagine is a simple one-pot-wonder that you can leave to simmer on the hob (or BBQ), leaving you free to sit back and enjoy the summer evenings. It only takes a little effort at the beginning. The Sweetcorn Fritters are made, cooked and demolished in less than 20 minutes. Well, they are in our household!



Nicola Pengelly at home
in her herb garden

Chicken Tagine (Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

2/3 chicken fillets (or quorn fillets if doing vegetarian version), diced
1 onion, finely diced
Selected vegetables of your choice, peeled and sliced / chopped (personally I use 2 carrots, 1 red pepper, ½ squash, ½ sweet potato & 1 courgette)
1 tin of chopped tomatoes
A handful of apricots and dates
1 large knob of ginger, peeled and finely chopped
2 sprigs of rosemary
2 star anise
2 pieces of cinnamon bark
2 tsp tagine paste (widely available in supermarkets)
2 tbsp honey
Pinch of saffron
1 dried chilli
Olive Oil

One of my all time favourite recipes and inspired by my father, it happily doesn't require much looking after. If you don't own a tagine (the original Moroccan cooking pot) you can easily cook it in a casserole dish on your hob. Any leftovers are delicious the next day for lunch.

METHOD

- 1 Dice your chicken or quorn fillets and marinate in two tsp's of tagine paste with 1 tbsp olive oil. Set aside.
- 2 In your tagine (or large casserole dish) add the onion, ginger and rosemary with a glug of olive oil and cook slowly until onions are soft and translucent. Add the star anise, cinnamon bark, chilli and chicken / quorn fillets and cook for a further 5–10 minutes until the chicken is cooked.
- 3 Add the honey, tomatoes, dried fruit and vegetables (apart from the courgette). Stir. I usually add some water, filling the empty tomato tin half way. Place the courgette slices on top and sprinkle with saffron. Place the tagine or casserole lid on, leaving a little gap for steam to escape, bring slowly to the boil, and then take the heat right back to a slow simmer. Cook for an hour or until the vegetables are soft when you insert a knife into them.
Serve with couscous, bread and a mixed green salad.



Sweetcorn & Summer Vegetable Fritters (makes 10–12)

INGREDIENTS

175g self raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
2 eggs
125ml milk
1 tin of sweetcorn, drained
2 spring onions, chopped
Small handful of fresh garden peas (or frozen)
Small handful of baby broad beans, shelled
Handful of french beans, chopped
1 tbsp chopped parsley
Seasoning
Olive Oil

These little beauties are ideal for quick suppers. They really catch the freshness of summer vegetables coming into season. You can adapt the recipe to include whatever vegetables you have to hand.

METHOD

- 1 Place the flour, baking powder, eggs and milk into a large bowl and whisk for 2–3 minutes to form a smooth batter base. Stir in the vegetables, parsley and season with salt and pepper.
- 2 In a large frying pan, heat 1tbsp of olive oil. Spoon 4 tbsp of batter into the pan, forming mini fritters. Cook for 1–2 minutes on each side until golden.
- 3 Remove the fritters and place them on a plate lined with kitchen towel and keep warm in the oven on low heat while cooking the remainder of the batter.
- 4 Serve warm with a mixed salad and some sweet chilli sauce. The fritters will keep for two days in the fridge and can be eaten cold in packed lunches.



Valley View Restaurant at Carnon Downs Garden Centre

It was a beautiful spring day and being keen gardeners, Ann and I thought we would visit Cornwall's largest garden centre, have a look at what they had to offer and as an added bonus, we would have lunch in their Valley View Restaurant. Carnon Downs Garden Centre is just off the A39 Truro to Falmouth road, just follow the brown signs.

Parking was easy, with the accessible bays having ample space and situated right outside the entrance. The entire surface is flat with a gentle slope running into the entrance, which is wide enough for at least two wheelchairs. Just inside the door there is ample space where we could gather our thoughts and decide which way to go. There is a well signed wheelchair accessible route to all the departments, with walk ways wide enough to not worry about knocking into people or plants!

There is a lot to browse around, from water features and statues, to hot tubs, and barbecues and even a specialised reptile house. We took our time, and after mentally refurbishing our house we entered the garden sundries department, which stocks everything any gardener could possibly need. There is plenty to see at Carnon Downs Garden Centre but we were feeling hungry by this time!

Breakfast is served up until 11.30am with lunch running from noon to 2.30pm, but homemade cakes are available all day. There was a huge choice, from lite bites, such as a bacon and egg roll, to baked potatoes and paninis to a children's menu and a daily specials board. We both chose beef casserole with vegetables. On the server

was a large display of freshly baked homemade cakes, flans, scones (fruit, plain and savoury), with the lady who baked them eager to advise and recommend.

The serving staff were 'smiley' and polite and very efficient at getting the queue served and seated. All different types of teas and coffees were on offer, together with local beers and wines and numerous soft drinks. Before we knew it we were sitting at a large table, looking - as the name suggests - over the valley. From our high vantage point the whole of the Downs were laid out before us. The sky was a beautiful blue and buzzards were soaring above.

In no time at all the food was brought from the kitchen by a friendly waitress and it really was delicious and beautifully presented.

During the afternoon there was a free talk on wine appreciation that included tasting, thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended and not a bad way to spend an afternoon!

Displayed on the restaurant tables were details of various forthcoming local charity fundraising events. How refreshing to see a large accessible business opening up its facilities to the wider community to raise money for local charities.

There is a lot to see at Carnon Downs Garden Centre and you may not see it all in one visit, especially if a wine tasting is on offer!

By George and Ann Le Hunte

Council approves new care charging policy



Photos by Geoff Squibb

Cornwall Council has approved a new system for assessing a person's financial contribution towards the cost of their care. The review of charging affects people who receive home care services from the council, but does not extend to people living in residential or nursing care. Since April, a person's disability-related expenditure has no longer been taken into account, simplifying the assessment process and meaning some people will pay less in future, while no-one will be financially disadvantaged.

The decision was taken following an extensive public consultation and a member working group, which met last December to discuss the five possible options in detail. Although the new charging policy took effect from this April, it will be phased in over the year, as people who use services have their annual review. At the same time, people will be given a personal budget – a positive, new way of working which puts them in charge of how they spend the money they receive to pay for their care.

Armand Toms, cabinet member for adult care and support, says, "The option we have chosen will cost us more money, but it's fairer and more equitable for people who use our services and will work best with personal budgets."

The views of service users were gathered during a 90-day consultation on the proposals from August to November last year. Nine public drop-in events were held to explain the options and more than 700 people responded with their preferences. The option chosen scored third out of the five.

Armand Toms explains, "This was a complex and sensitive issue and we decided that more work needed to be done to reach the right decision. The member working group needed to balance people's preferences with the combined impact these arrangements would have on the people

who use our services, and the income the council generates through charging."

Last November, the Department of Health released new guidance to councils about charging for care at home which had to be considered alongside the outcomes of the consultation, in addition to the White Paper on benefit reform.

The current charging arrangements were established at a time when people using services routinely accessed traditionally-commissioned services through the council, rather than service users deciding themselves how they want to meet their care outcomes through the use of personal budgets. Previously, a service user's contribution towards the cost of their care at home had taken into account their income, their capital and disability-related allowances and expenditure.

However, this would have led in future to conflicts between the rules of what is allowed as disability-related expenditure and the choice available under personal budgets, for example complementary therapy, which is not essential, but a valid use of a personal budget.



SPORT & LEISURE



Photos by Steve Hillman

A new set of wheels for Cornwall Cougars

Cornwall Cougars have teamed up with the Cornwall Sports Partnership to create a brand new club, the Cornwall Cougars Wheelchair Basketball Club. The first of its kind in the county.

The Sports Partnership were successful in bidding for funds to purchase 16 sports wheelchairs and it seemed an obvious move to team up with an already successful club like the Cornwall Cougars to make this happen.

Wheelchair Basketball is a leading Paralympic sport, with its roots going back to the late 40's. Although initially a rehabilitation and recreational activity for spinal cord injured people, it quickly developed into a competitive sport. Today the National Wheelchair Basketball League consists of 65 teams playing in nine divisions and people with a wide range of impairments are engaging with it.

Non disabled players are eligible to play in divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4, junior league and women's league. Virtually everyone who can conceivably play wheelchair basketball is encouraged to do so.

If you are new to the game and looking to play or become involved in wheelchair basketball, come along and join the new club, held on Thursday

evenings, 7.30–9pm at Truro College Multi-Use Games Area.

For further information about the Cornwall Cougars Wheelchair Basketball Club, please contact Cornwall's Disability Sport Community Coach Steve Hillman.

T: 01872 323344

E: shillman@cornwall.gov.uk

For further information about Wheelchair Basketball visit www.gbwba.org.uk

Anyone aged 13 years and over is invited to join the Cornwall Cougars Basketball Club.

On Thursday evenings at Truro College MUGA
7.30–9pm

First session is free and then the cost is £1 per session for the next ten weeks. After this, the cost will depend on club numbers.

For further information please contact Steve Hillman

E: shillman@cornwall.gov.uk



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Warren Parker Cornwall FA Disability Football Development Officer,
on 01208 262986 or email warren.parker@cornwallfa.com

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	Summerleaze	Summerleaze Beach Office	01288 352226
Falmouth	Gyllyngvase	Gyllyngvase Beach Café	01326 312884
Looe	Town	Looe Town Trust Seafront Workshops	01503 263709
Newquay	Fistral	Fistral Surf Hire Shop	01637 850584
	Towan	Blue Reef Aquarium	01637 878134
Padstow	Harlyn	Harlyn Surf School	01841 533076
	Treyarnon	Youth Hostel Association	0845 3719664
Redruth	Portreath	Surf Lifesaving Club	01736 334835
St Ives	Porthminster	Please call for details	01736 334839
		Child's sand chair also available	
St Marys (IOS)	Porthcressa	Town Hall, Isles of Scilly (IOS)	01720 422537
Wadebridge	Polzeath	Wavehunter Surf School	07969 660014

Cycling for everyone with absolutely NO exceptions





After much hard work Cycleability was launched at Newquay Sports centre in March. It was a huge success which identified a great need for these facilities in Cornwall. The day started with an introduction by Lady Mary Holborow and a short presentation. Then Lady Mary and Lady Vanessa George led the way to the tennis courts at Newquay Tretherras School, where they started the try outs on a Draisin Duo tricycle tandem.

Approximately 30 cycles were available including handcycles, tandems, recumbents, go-carts, and even power assisted cycles. If because of a disability you had never cycled, thought your cycling days were over, or lost confidence, the smiles all round proved there was something for everybody.

The cycles used on the day were kindly loaned by specialist cycle manufacturers. Hopefully in the near future Cycleability will have raised sufficient funds to purchase machines for Cornwall.

Eventually Cycleability aim to run an accessible cycling session around the area every two weeks with qualified volunteer instructors and a range of specialist cycles. Disabled groups will be able to try out different machines and build up confidence in a fun, safe, and educational environment.

Everybody knows the benefits of cycling. These are often greater for disabled people as they can increase independence, help improve confidence, co-ordination, flexibility, health, and importantly improve quality of life. Even some medical professionals accept regular cycling can be beneficial.

Who knows, perhaps hidden Paralympic talent in Cornwall is just waiting to be discovered, the launch was only the start!

www.cycleability.org.uk

To make a donation visit
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Tehidy House Royal Cornwall Hospital Truro TR1 3LJ

National Advice & Information Line
Freephone: 0800 559 3636



If you can't afford a doctor, go to an airport - you'll get a free x-ray and a breast exam, and; if you mention Al Qaeda, you'll get a free colonoscopy.

St Patrick's Day

Paddy had been drinking at his local Dublin pub all day and most of the night celebrating St Patrick's Day. Mick, the bartender says

"You'll not be drinking anymore tonight, Paddy."

Paddy replies, "OK Mick, I'll be on my way then."

Paddy spins around on his stool and steps off, only to fall flat on his face.

"Paddy, you eeejit" says Mick.

Paddy pulls himself up by the stool and dusts himself off.

He takes a step towards the door and falls flat on his face.

"Feck," says Paddy. He looks to the doorway and thinks to himself that if he can just get to the door and some fresh air he'll be fine.

He belly crawls to the door and shimmies up to the door frame.

He sticks his head outside and takes a deep breath of fresh air.

Feeling much better he takes a step out onto the pavement and falls flat on his face again.

"Bejesus" he says. He can see his house just a few doors down and crawls to the door, hauls himself up the door frame, opens the door and shimmies inside.

He crawls up the stairs to his bedroom door and says, "I can make it to the bed."

He takes a step into the room and falls flat on his face. "Shoite" says Paddy and falls into bed.

The next morning, his wife Jess, comes into the room carrying a cup of coffee and says, "Get up Paddy. Did you have a bit to drink last night?"

Paddy says, "I think I did, Jess. But how'd you know?"

"Mick phoned . . . You left your wheelchair at the pub."

Sudoku

	7			3	5			
	8					5	6	
	9		1			3		8
		4	5					6
			2	7	4			
5					1	4		
1		9			8		4	
	3	6					5	
			7	5			1	

Sudoku answers are on the next page

Parking Victory

Norwich is now the second council who have faced action under the Equality Act 2010 concerning discriminatory parking charges.

Helen Dolphin, one of the five people involved said: "The council had been claiming its policy was fair because disabled people could afford to pay just like everybody else, but they didn't take into account that some disabled people take longer to get around and do their shopping, so it wasn't fair."

Norwich City Council has now changed its policy allowing Blue Badge holders to get an hour's free parking for every hour they pay.

Disabled Motoring UK (formerly Mobilise) and Wake Smith & Tofield (a solicitors who operate on a no win no fee basis) have said they will support other disabled people living in areas where councils are now charging them the same to park as non-disabled people.

Disabled crash victim fights to save his home as ex-wife wins most of his £500,000 damages

Kevin Mansfield, 41, lost a leg and suffered serious spinal injuries when he was hit by a car in Launceston in 1992. He received £500,000 compensation in 1998, five years before he met Catherine, 37. The couple married in 2003 and had two children but split up five years later.

His wife was awarded more than half the damages payment, even though it was intended specifically to make Mr Mansfield's life easier. The judge

said the money should be regarded simply as an asset of the marriage.

Mr Mansfield has now been granted permission to have the case heard at the Court of Appeal in London after complaining the money is his only means of support. If he loses the case, he says, he will have to sell the home, which has been specially adapted for his needs and move away from his children in Chelmsford, Essex, to a less expensive part of the county.

At a divorce hearing last May, a judge ruled the compensation should be 'put in the pot' of assets to be divided and went on to award just over half to Mrs Mansfield. The appeal will now be heard before three judges though the couple have been urged to try and resolve their differences in the meantime to avoid 'potentially enormous legal costs'.

Disabled Facilities Grant

The Department for Communities and Local Government has announced the local authority allocations for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme in England, making available £180m, an increase of £11m on the amount allocated for 2010-11. Details of the amount awarded to each authority will be available on the Department for Communities and Local Government website.

DFGs assist disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their own homes through the provision of adaptations. The grant provides financial assistance for the provision of a wide range of housing adaptations ranging from stair lifts to home extensions. The programme is therefore key in delivering the Government's objective of facilitating greater opportunities for people to live independently in their own homes.

Sudoku answers

3	1	9	6	5	7	8	4	2
2	5	8	9	1	4	6	3	7
7	4	6	8	2	3	9	5	1
9	3	4	1	8	6	7	2	5
5	8	1	4	7	2	3	6	9
6	2	7	3	9	5	4	1	8
8	7	3	2	6	1	5	9	4
1	6	5	7	4	9	2	8	3
4	9	2	5	3	8	1	7	6

No longer on the outside



When Tuppy Owens, a Zoology graduate turned sex education publisher met some disabled people, she became aware they could do with a little help in finding love/sex/fun, so

together they started a club and managed to get their idea featured in both the Observer and Guardian newspapers. Tuppy never thought she would still be involved thirty one years later, but still loves it and here tells DISCOVER why

Outsiders is a very special club for people with physical and social disabilities catering to many of our members' personal needs. Some seek friends, many wish to find a partner, and others want support on their journey of self-acceptance and discovery. Many things separate us from the online dating sites and the most important thing is safety. One hears horrific stories about the lies and predatory activities disabled people are subjected to online and Outsiders does everything in its power to be safe. Our application form makes it almost impossible for people to join if they are not genuine, disabled and respectful.

Many disabled people say they don't want a disabled partner because they want to feel totally integrated into society and desire a non-disabled partner. Sometimes they get together with a non-disabled partner but all too often, they sit and wait....and wait. Our disabled members who get together say they find acceptance. In fact, we boast Outsiders is a microcosm of acceptance.

Our new website is currently being launched and we're soon to have the facilities for joining online, with an exciting members area and international peer support forum. We encourage peer support especially in areas where disabled people struggle with sex: topics such as body image, catheters,

spasms, fatigue, ostomies and breathing difficulties are raised. Discussing these things with someone who has the same worries as you can be really empowering.

Members live all over the UK and abroad. Our members run lunches and outings locally and the good news is we have a West Country Group. Although they usually meet up in and around Bristol, they are a dynamic bunch and are not afraid to venture far from home and would certainly support members in Cornwall. The group is run by Sarah Batten, a young lady with cerebral palsy and a speech impairment. The exciting thing about Sarah is that she's now in a relationship with Steve, who runs our Midlands group. It took them three years to admit to their love for each other and now they are blissfully happy. Rather than dump their responsibilities within the Outsiders, they are taking on more, such is their love for Outsiders as well as each other.

I hope this helps to give you a picture of



Mikey Argy

Outsiders and how we work. We have always been pretty self-sufficient, unable to attract large grants to pay salaries, so we volunteer and raise our own funds to pay the rent and phone, etc. One of our fundraisers last year was an actual awards show winner, Mikey Argy, a member of a team of campaigners who have managed to obtain funding for people whose limbs are affected by Thalidomide. Mikey was so impressed with Outsiders that she agreed to join us as a figurehead and spokesperson. She wrote, "I am bowled over by the generosity of time and dedication of your volunteers and by the professionalism and accountability. You have a great setup. Outsiders should feel proud they are members. I am proud too I am able to do my bit and be a part of a great organisation."

We do hope if you're reading this, you might feel the same!

Dr Tuppy Owens, founder

T: 0207 3548291

www.ousiders.org.uk



Outsiders members Sarah and Steve

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DISCOVER DIRECTORY

ADVICE AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Action for Blind People	01392 332818
Adaction (formerly Drug & Alcohol Agency)	01872 263001
Age Concern	01872 266388
Alcoholics Anonymous (24 hours)	0845 7697555
Arthritis Care	0808 8004050
Asbah	01726 861062
Benefits Enquiry Line	0800 882200
British Polio Fellowship	0800 0180586
British Red Cross	01872 272878
Citizens Advice Bureaux Cornwall	0844 4994188
Charcot Marie Tooth Disease	01566 86818
Consumer Direct	0845 4040506
Cornwall Advocacy Service	01872 242478
Cornwall Sight Centre	01872 261110
Cornwall Deaf Association Tel/Fax	01872 225868
Text	01872 263664
Cornwall Disabled Association	01872 273518
Cornwall Dyslexia Association Helpline	01872 274827
Cornwall Macmillan Service	01872 354383
Cornwall People First	01736 334857
Cornwall Race Equality Council	07515 580002
Cornwall Rural Community Council	01872 273952
CRUSE Bereavement Care Helpline	01726 76100
DIAL Cornwall	01736 759500
Direct Payments Scheme	01872 324357
Disability Cornwall	01736 756655
Eating Disorder Association	01726 884432
Enable in Cornwall Ltd (training advice)	01208 77711
Epilepsy Association Helpline	0808 8005050
Gamblers Anonymous	0207 3843040
HEADWAY (for head-injured people)	01208 873567
Healthy Gay Cornwall	01872 262929
Huntington's Disease Association	01822 835974
ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service)	01579 345193
Learning Disability helpline	0808 8081111

MESH (ME Support & Help)	01209 217271
Mid-Cornwall Lifestyles	01208 79911
Motor Neurone Disease Association	0560 1984243
Multiple Sclerosis Society	0808 8008000
National Autistic Society (West Cornwall Local Support Branch)	07901 103351
National Osteoporosis Society Cornwall Helpline	01872 561787
Parkinsons Disease Society Helpline	0808 8000303
Relate – Relationship Counselling	01726 74128
Sexual Health Service	01872 358750
Shelter	08445 152300
SSAFA Forces Help	01872 863078
St John Ambulance Cornwall	01726 815967
St Petrocs Society	01872 264153
Stroke Association	01392 447362
YMCA Penzance	01736 365016
YWCA – Truro Young Women's Centre	01872 263112

CARERS

Cornwall Carers Service Helpline (8am–6pm Mon–Fri out of hours answerphone)	01872 266383
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COUNCIL

Cornwall Council	0300 1234100
Social Care - Directorates of Adult Care & Support and Children, Schools & Families	0300 1234131
Out of hours (between 5pm–7.45am)	01208 251300

CRISIS SUPPORT

Cornwall Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre	01872 262100
Domestic Violence 24hr Helpline	01872 225629
Samaritans Cornwall	01872 277277
Victim Support	0845 0567999
West Cornwall Women's Aid	01736 367539
Women's Domestic Violence Network	01208 79992

DISCOVER DIRECTORY

HEALTH

Community Health Services PALS	01326 435885
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust (main switchboard)	0845 1708000
CIOSPCT Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)	0845 1708000
Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CFT)	01726 291000
CFT PALS/Customer Support	01726 291109
CFT out of hours	01208 251300
Dental Care Emergency Service	01872 354375
Derriford Hospital	0845 1558155
Derriford PALS	01752 211818
Disablement Services Centre	0845 1558071
GP Out of Hours Service	0845 2000227
Health Promotion Service	01209 313419
Marie Therese House (MTH)	01736 758875
NHS Direct	0845 4647
Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust (Treliske)	01872 250000
RCHT PALS	01872 252793

MENTAL HEALTH

Bufferzone	07929 867264
Cornwall Mental Health Project	01872 243532
Dementia Helpline	01872 266388
Kernow Mind Partnership	
Carrick	01872 222469
Newquay	01637 871063
Plymouth & District	01752 254004
West Cornwall	01209 714550
Nightlink (between 5pm-midnight)	0808 8000306
Rethink	01208 815676
Rural Community Link Project (promoting mental health)	01726 821858

MOBILITY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Cornwall Mobility Centre	01872 254920
HSC Mobility	01736 755927
Launceston Mobility	01566 774030
Pro Mobility	01326 569494
Tremorvah Industries	01872 324340

PARENTS YOUNG PEOPLE & CHILDREN

Barnardos (Social Inclusion Project)	
East	01566 86873
West	01736 361868
Childline	0800 1111
Connexions (free from landlines only)	0800 9755111
Contact A Family	0808 8083555
Cornwall SHARE (information /advice /counseling 13 -25yrs)	0800 181033
Disabled Parents Network	0300 3300639
Face2Face	0844 8009250
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 8005000
Parent Partnership Service	01736 752826
Special Parenting Service	01872 358713
Young People Cornwall & Hear Our Voice (EEFO)	01872 261989

TAXIS (with good accessibility provision)

A2B	08001695473
Ansom Cabs	01208 72207
Bodmin Taxi Service	01208 73000
Caradon Cabs	01579 340007
Hayle Taxis	01736 753000
L & R Cars	01736 800414
Richard Wilson Transport	01726 883460
Summercourt Travel	01726 861108
Travel 4,000	01209 719961

VOLUNTEERS & VOLUNTEER TRANSPORT

Age Concern Volunteer Transport (TAP)	01872 223388
Volunteer Cornwall Head Office	01872 265305
Transport	01872 265300
Cornwall Community Volunteer Services	01209 718844
East Cornwall Council for Voluntary Services	01208 832763
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	0845 6014670

Join Disability Cornwall for free and DISCOVER more

The easiest way to ensure you receive free copies of DISCOVER delivered to your door is to become a member. This is just one of the benefits of membership which is free for disabled people and their carers living within the county.

For organisations the cost is £25 with an annual renewal fee of £17.50. Tick here for associate membership (please complete correspondence details only and enclose a cheque or make a BACS payment).

Name:

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I am a UK tax payer and I would like Disability Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Ltd to claim Gift Aid on my donations unless I notify you otherwise. I confirm that I pay income or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount claimed as Gift Aid in the tax year.

Signed

Date

As a user led organisation 51% of our membership must have an impairment or health condition. Learning the needs of members helps us ensure we cover relevant information in DISCOVER, therefore please tick the types of impairment you have.

- Learning difficulty Mental health issues
 Physical impairment Sensory impairment
 Other

Please explain and/or state the nature of your impairment or illness

We are recruiting disabled people who are available via email to give us feedback on issues of concern, called the DC100. Obtaining your views helps us ensure we act in a truly representative way. Would you be interested in joining the DC100?

Yes

Occasionally other organisations offer to support us by mailing DISCOVER to some of our members which significantly reduces cost to the charity. Therefore we may give them an envelope with your address on it.

If you do not wish us to do this tick here

I would like to make a donation to support your charity and your work.

I enclose a cheque made payable to Disability Cornwall for £ _____

I would like to setup a regular donation by standing order:

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monthly annually

Follows are the bank details which you will need if you wish to set up a standing order. Please use your name as the reference.

CAF Bank (Charities Aid Foundation)

Account Name: Disability Cornwall

Account No: 00082346

Sort code: 40-52-40

DISCOVER SUPPORTERS & SPONSORS

In the 2001 census there were 106,000 disabled people in Cornwall, approximately 20% of the population (Census 2001)

The poverty rate for disabled adults in the UK is twice that of non disabled adults (Employers Forum on Disability)

DIAL received almost 850 enquiries in the first quarter of this year

There are approximately 9 million people who are Deaf or hard of hearing in the UK (RNID)



DIAL have raised an additional £69,000 for people entitled to benefits in the first quarter of this year

In March 2008, 156,000 people were registered blind or partially sighted (Blind & Partially Sighted Registrations March 2008)

DISCOVER is the voice of disabled people in Cornwall

Only 17% of disabled people were born with their impairment or illness (Papworth Trust)

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